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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY STUDIES IN ENGLISH  
AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Number 116

ITALY IN ENGLISH LITERATURE





WILLIAM HUGGINS

AFTER HOGARTH

One of the first Englishmen of the eighteenth century to show a notably romantic interest in Italian literature; the first in his time to translate the *Orlando furioso*; and the first in any time to English the whole of the *Divina commedia*.

ITALY IN ENGLISH  
LITERATURE

1755 - 1815

ORIGINS OF THE ROMANTIC  
INTEREST IN ITALY

BY  
RODERICK MARSHALL

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, IN THE FACULTY  
OF PHILOSOPHY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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TO  
JESSIE MARSHALL



## FOREWORD

The rôle of Italy in English literature from the days of Chaucer down to the Commonwealth has been widely acclaimed and pretty faithfully chronicled. From the Commonwealth to the present, however, the Italian influence, though far from negligible, has been largely neglected. Why the theme should have lost interest for inquirers and historians at so early a period, I find it difficult to determine. I am told that historians usually cease to appear at the point where the facts become so slight as to be hardly worth recording. But even a cursory examination of the subject shows that it was only with marked slowness that English interest in Italian literature and life declined during the last sixty years of the seventeenth century; while, after fifty years or so of indifference, it was reborn during the latter half of the eighteenth century to flourish as vigorously as ever in the Romantic Movement and later. The preference of the literary historian for Chaucerian or Tudor, as contrasted with Restoration, interest in Italy must be largely a personal sentiment of the kind which makes some people prefer the morning to the afternoon. Such a supposition, however, only heightens the mystery of the fact that the rather splendid dawn of the romantic interest in Italy, not to mention the midday of that movement, has not won a chronicler. Whatever the reason, it is certain that the broad theme of the influence of Italy on English literature has never been fully traced beyond the year 1642.

It is my wish to fill this lacuna as well as I can, following the subject from 1642 to 1900. Whether I shall be able to complete the enterprise single-handed, I do not know. Perhaps I shall succeed in interesting others in helping tell what is to me a fascinating story.

A history of Italy in English literature from 1642 to 1900 seems to me to fall almost naturally into three parts, each susceptible of many convenient subdivisions: (1) the decline of the



Renaissance interest; (2) the origins of the romantic; and (3) the triumph of the romantic, supplemented by the Victorian. The slow decline of the Elizabethan and Jacobean excitement I hope to trace, or see traced, in a work or works called *Italy in English Literature, 1642-1755*; the revived ardor of the nineteenth century, in a work or works called *Italy in English Literature, 1815-1900*. The present book, covering the intervening years from 1755 to 1815, is a study of the gradations by which the early eighteenth-century indifference turned into the white-hot enthusiasm of Byron and Shelley. This part of the subject I have preferred to chronicle first because it lies under a thicker cloud of obscurity than any other. In view of the importance of the English romantic interest in Italy, I have thought it worth while to consider its origins as carefully as possible.

I do not pretend, of course, to have exhausted the subject of Anglo-Italian literary relations in even that small portion of the field which I have treated. Many problems and ramifications—such as the influence of Italian literary judgment on English literary criticism; of Italian Latin poetry on English Latin style; of Italian political thought on English political verse, and so forth—though sometimes touched on, did not seem to me to fall within the scope of the task I had set myself. I have really only tried to sink a sizable shaft into metal-bearing soil. In the near future I hope to publish a bibliography of my whole subject which will show, among other things, what I have here left undone. Besides the seven hundred odd books discussed or mentioned in the present work, this bibliography will contain more than three thousand other books illustrative of English interest in Italy between 1642 and 1900. This list of books, arranged chronologically, will include: (1) Italian grammars and dictionaries intended for the use of Englishmen; (2) English editions of books written by Italians; (3) English translations of Italian books; (4) English books imitated from or otherwise influenced by Italian ones; (5) English travels in Italy and all other English books containing substantial references to Italian literature, fine arts, history, manners, morals, scenery, and so forth; and (6) English plays, operas, novels, tales, and dialogues which introduce Italian characters. Such a bibliography

will not only chart the course of any future books which I may write on this subject, but will, I trust, furnish ideas, guidance, and material to others interested in the field.

To estimate the value to others of the present work is manifestly impossible. To me the most interesting parts of the study have consisted in dissecting out of the mass of English literature the earliest signs of the romantic attitude toward Italy, especially as they are displayed in the works of Baretta and Huggins; in explaining the hitherto neglected relation of the Della Cruscan to my theme; and in indicating the crucial influence of William Roscoe. The chance to discuss Mrs. Piozzi's travels, Mrs. Radcliffe's tales of terror, Hunt's *Story of Rimini*, Merivale's *Orlando*, and Byron's *Parisina* in relation to my theme I welcomed as relaxation from the task of fitting all the facts into their proper places.

For help in collecting material for this study I have to thank, first of all, the staff of the British Museum Library, with special reference to Mr. J. Petherbridge; and, secondly, that of the Columbia University Library, with special reference to Mr. Roger Howson, Miss Constance Winchell, and Mr. Frederic Erb. To my friends, Professor Hoxie N. Fairchild and Mrs. Esther McGill, I am indebted for a dozen valuable references. To Professor Harrison R. Steeves I am grateful not only for telling me of an obscure form of Italian influence—early nineteenth-century chapbooks modelled on Mrs. Radcliffe—but also for putting some of these scarce documents into my hands. All students of Anglo-Italian literary relations, and none more than myself, owe an enormous debt to Paget Toynbee's monumental *Dante in English Literature from Chaucer to Cary* (1909). In gratitude to him I am glad to have been able to add to his accumulation two or three dozen references which have escaped his dragnet. Last of all, I owe some thanks to the booksellers of England and Scotland who, in the course of continually stirring the Dead Sea of old books, often bring curious relics to the surface. Several important items in this study, seldom come across in bibliographies and library catalogues, have been fished out of their mouldy cellars. Perhaps valuable links in our story still lie hidden in the cobwebs and dust of London, Edinburgh, or some pretty village in the Midlands.

For help in fashioning this material into a book I have to thank Professor Ernest H. Wright, whose standards of limpid logic and smooth yet vigorous prose, as displayed in *The Meaning of Rousseau*, are a guide and spur. Professor Dino Bigongiari, Professor Harry M. Ayres, Professor Charles S. Baldwin, and Professor Herbert J. C. Grierson have been good enough to read and criticize my book.

For a sense, so helpful to a work of this kind, that I am chronicling, not the petrified past, but merely some earlier aspects of a living influence, I am indebted to my friends at the Casa Italiana of Columbia University, most ably presided over by Professor Giuseppe Prezzolini. Professor Peter Riccio and Miss Teresa Carbonara have never failed to give cheerful and helpful answers to my questions about Italian orthography. I trust that my endeavors to estimate England's debt to Italy in the past may help just a little to increase America's borrowings in the present.

For their interest and encouragement I am indebted to Professor William T. Brewster, Professor William Haller, and all my other friends and colleagues at Barnard; and to the late Professor Ashley H. Thorndike, who helped so many Columbia students and teachers to find in the scholarship of poetry a gleam which we may call the poetry of scholarship.

R. M.

Barnard College  
March, 1934

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I  
ITALY IN ENGLISH LITERATURE  
BEFORE 1755





## PART I

### ITALY IN ENGLISH LITERATURE BEFORE 1755

#### ITALY AS LITERARY INSPIRATION

The Italian boot is, and has for a long time been, stuffed to the neck with matter calculated to set people writing.

In the first place, there are the Italians themselves. These, usually thought by foreigners to be filled on the one hand with profound courtesy, generosity, and wisdom, and on the other with frankly inflammable love, lust, jealousy, and revenge, are almost bound to beguile the imagination of dramatists and story- and novel-writers. To other nations, at any rate, the Italians have long seemed models of passionate self-surrender. Their feelings have been thought to be touched with mania, their lives controlled by *idées fixes*. Under the sway of some ruling emotion they are supposed to be capable of unheard-of generosity and self-sacrifice, or of equally unheard-of assassination and revenge. On the one hand, they will kill on slight provocation; on the other, pine away of unrequited love. It is not necessary to dwell on the fascination which such notions of character are bound to exercise over dramatists and story-tellers. Passions are their stock-in-trade, and they can be relied upon to go for their raw materials to a country where passions are said to reach their fullest, if sometimes rankest, growth.

In the second place, there is Italian history. It is studded with drama-tinged figures, mostly Italian though sometimes foreign-born. These include all the types best calculated to appeal to poets and playwrights: that is, ambitious princes whom fate entices to a tragic "fall"; patriots who are often forced to conspire in darkness, hedged by a hundred hazards, for the freedom of their country; and domestic sinners of high rank whose dark passions lead them to commit all forms of family murder, the most popular being parricide, fratricide, and uxoricide. In dramatic "falls" from power, battles for republican freedom, and "domestic tragedies" the history of medieval and Renaissance Italy exceeds, per-

## ITALY IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

aps, that of any country in the world. Who has not heard of the ebacles of those ambitious power-seekers, Ezzelino da Romano, Castruccio Castracani, Lodovico Sforza, Cesare Borgia, and Giovanni Luigi de' Fieschi? Certain of the popes who tried to bully emporal monarchs or hoist their family fortunes have often fallen, n English eyes, into this same category of disappointed supermen, chiefly Gregory VII, Boniface VIII, Alexander VI, Clement VII, and Paul III. Who has not heard of those daring Italian patriots, Arnaldo da Brescia, Giovanni da Procida, Cola di Rienzi, Andrea Doria, Francesco Ferrucci, Filippo Strozzi, and Masaniello? Who, finally, does not know that the following persons were mixed up in old desolating crimes of poisoned bowl or dagger: Francesca da Rimini, Giovanna I of Naples, Parisina of Ferrara, Lorenzino and Cosimo I de' Medici, Vittoria Accorambona, Bianca Capello, and Beatrice Cenci? The names in this paragraph I have chosen from among dozens.

In the third place, there is Italian literature. It is so large and famous in nearly every department that the number of its admirers, translators, and imitators can hardly be small. In long narrative poems Italian literature takes precedence of all others with a list of names including Dante, Boiardo, Pulci, Ariosto, Tasso, Marino, Tassoni, and Forteguerri. Among these are two or three of the world's major poets. In short prose narratives Italian literature also ranks high with the names of Boccaccio, Bandello, and Giralaldi Cinzio. The fame of her seventeenth-century novelists, Biondi, Armeni, Assarino, Loredano, and others, has not lasted so well. Nor did she produce, before the eighteenth century, any very notable dramatists, though the comedies of Ariosto and Machiavelli and the pastoral plays of Tasso, Guarini, and G. U. Bonarelli della Rovere are always remembered and enjoyed. In lyric poetry, however, Italy again takes a high place among the nations with Dante, Petrarch, Poliziano, Lorenzo de' Medici, Sannazzaro, Della Casa, Chiabrera, Testi, Filicaia, Guidi, Frugoni, and dozens more. Their sonnets and *canzoni* are filled with three great themes: love of woman, of country, and of God. Things so good are bound to be copied and followed.

In the fourth place, there are the Italian fine arts, painting,

sculpture, and architecture. It is unnecessary for me to point out that Italy bristles with palaces and churches, the walls of which are loaded with pictures and trimmed with statues. These fine things and the lives of their makers, Giotto, Masaccio, Raphael, Titian, Correggio, Michelangelo, and all the rest, throw out a challenge to travellers, biographers, and poets.

Finally, there is Italian scenery. Some of it is rich, fertile, cultivated; some is wild, rugged, wind-swept. Seen under a bright blue sky or against an orange sunset, it has usually claimed a good-sized share of the pages printed about things Italian.<sup>1</sup>

From the time of Chaucer to our own day Italy, with her people, history, literature, arts, and scenery, has set Britons writing, and inspired a notable list of English travels, histories, translations, poems, plays, and novels. But the light of Italian influence, though it has usually flared over Britain, has occasionally threatened to go out. It is with its gradual recovery from a period of almost total extinction that we are concerned here. Let us briefly examine, by way of introduction, how this flame came to sink so low.

#### THE HEYDAY OF ITALIAN INFLUENCE: 1550-1642

Though English literary interest in Italian things may be easily traced back to Chaucer—with his admiration of Barnabò Visconti, that "God of delit, and scourge of Lumbardie," and his borrowings from Boccaccio, Dante, and Petrarch—it was not until the days of Queen Elizabeth that it became of widespread importance. Then, as we know, their passionate detection of the Continental culture of the Renaissance gave English writers an interest in Italian character, history, and literature which sometimes amounted to a preoccupation. In those days Englishmen began to explore, as it were, the glorious mystery of the senses and passions; and, as has often been pointed out, it was Italy, first and foremost, who nursed and guided their explorations. Directly and indirectly, Italian stories, poems, plays, histories, and courtesies

<sup>1</sup> Among other Italian things to attract English attention have usually been music, operas, and political, social, and scientific writings. All consideration of these I am forced, partly by the "literary" nature of this book and partly by the magnitude of the undertaking, to forego. Perhaps I shall find something to say of them on another occasion.

books did a great deal to color the destiny of English literature during the years from 1550 to 1642. In order to briefly summarize this influence, I have ventured to treat these years collectively.

Italian literature was extravagantly admired. Petrarch with his sonnets to Laura was for long one of the gods of English poets' idolatry. His was one of the brightest stars which shone at the birth of English lyric poetry and his influence is to be traced from Wyatt and Surrey (pre-Elizabethans) through, to mention only a few, Watson, Constable, Sidney, Daniel, Drayton, and Spenser, to Drummond. Other Italian lyrists translated and imitated in England included Serafino d'Aquila, Guarini, Tasso, Celiano, Marino, Sannazzaro, and Groto. English fondness for Italian epics gave rise to complete translations of Tasso and Ariosto and to partial versions of Boiardo and Bracciolini. The influence of these writers on the English epic is to be measured in no meaner poets than Spenser and Milton (Italianized by 1642). In these days Dante, though often praised, was apparently little read. Plays were translated, into both English and Latin, from the Italian of Ariosto, Dolce, Pasqualigo, Groto, Politi, and Della Porta. Those which were best liked, however, and most often imitated were the pastorals of Tasso, Guarini, and Bonarelli della Rovere. The seventeenth-century romances of Biondi, Loredano, and others were translated but seem to have awakened few echoes. It was the shorter stories, the *novelle* of Boccaccio, Bandello, Giraldi Cinzio, and others, which more profusely, though not more profoundly, than any other branch of Italian letters affected English literature. They were not only translated, paraphrased, imitated, and versified, but were often made into excellent English plays. Among the chief tales to attract the versifiers and dramatists were those of Titus and Gisippus, Tancredi and Ghismonda, Nastagio and Traversari,<sup>2</sup> and Patient Griselda from Boccaccio; those of the Countess of Cellant, the Lord of Virle, the Duchess of Malfi, and Didaco and Violante from Bandello; and that of Romeo and Juliet from Da Porto. In contrast to these somber or tragic stories, the amorous intrigues of the third, seventh,

<sup>2</sup> So called in Christopher Tye's (?) poetical version (1569) of Boccaccio's *Decamerone*, V, 8; when Dryden translated the same story in his *Fables* (1700), he called them Theodore and Honoria.

and eighth days of Boccaccio's *Decamerone* were often put to use in the comedies of the time.

A conception of Italian character, partly suggested by these stories and rounded out from courtesy books and the twice-told tales of travellers, gave rise to large numbers of stories and plays about Italians. Never in the history of English drama have so many plays been laid in Italy as in Elizabethan and Jacobean times. Hardly a dramatist of note but was preoccupied with Italian psychology. For the Italian, it seemed, was a compound of the most signal virtues and vices. In the practice of courtesy, statecraft, and love he was the model of Europe; but he had also the defects of these excellences, pride, ambition, and lust, in which he likewise excelled. The Italian's character customarily manifested itself in extremes. His sense of honor led him into acts of angelic generosity or fiendish vengeance. His diplomacy was as often characterized by treachery as by loyalty to his prince. His capacity for love either raised him to the stars or drowned him in pitch. James Howell was merely summing up an idea which had been current in England for a hundred years when he wrote, in his *Instructions for Forreine Travell* (1642), that in Italy the traveller "shall find Vertue and Vice, Love and Hatred, Atheisme and Religion, in their extremes. . . . *Of the best wines you make your tartest vinegar.*" Though certain Englishmen professed to be shocked by Italian adultery, treachery, and revenge, dramatists were dazzled by the unsuspected depths of human passion at which these vices hinted. The psychology of the southern nation interested them even more than their own. In the preface to her *Elizabethan Translations from the Italian* (1916) Mary Augusta Scott affirms that some five hundred extant plays of this period lean toward Italy, many of them being actually laid there. The dramatists who seem to have specialized in Italian characters include Shakespeare, Jonson, Marston, Tourneur, Webster, Massinger, Fletcher, Ford, and Shirley. In some of their plays the Italian appears as a demigod of courtesy, magnanimity, friendship, and sentimental love; in the rest, as a demidevil of ambition, jealousy, vengeance, and fornication.

Nor were the excitements of Italian history lost on Elizabethan and Jacobean Englishmen, though they seem to have known little

more of it than those cross-sections described by Machiavelli, Guicciardini, and the Frenchman, Thomas de Fougasses. From these and from the tales of travellers they managed to squeeze a considerable number of important English plays. They were especially drawn to that side of Italian history which we have called "domestic tragedy" or "intramural murder," though they were also keenly aware of the drama in the falls of power-intoxicated princes or the plots of revolutionists. The chief plays on Italian history to date from these days were Barnes' *Devils Charter*, Webster's *White Divil*, Middleton's *Women Beware Women*, Gomersall's *Tragedie of Lodovick Sforza*, and Shirley's *Traytor*. Plays which moved to the rhythm of the "warres of Italie" were, to name only a tithe, Jonson's *The Case Is Alter'd*, Marston's *Antonio and Mellida*, Day's *Humour Out of Breath*, Massinger's *Duke of Millaine*, Heywood's *Mayden-head Well Lost*, and Davenant's *Siege*.

Of the Italian fine arts, architecture was the most admired in those days. There are occasional references in the travel books to "rare Italian pictures" and sometimes a name is mentioned, Michelangelo or Giulio Romano. On the whole, however, Italian painting and sculpture were wasted on English visitors and lost to English literature. What Englishmen seem to have admired above everything were the ingenious mechanical devices with which Italians achieved unusual effects in their theatres and gardens. As for Italian landscape, they loved chiefly its picturesque fertility of waving wheat and olive, orange, and fig trees, linked with festoons of loaded vines. This "Tempe—or Paradise of the World," as Coryat called it, was praised in the verse of many an Elizabethan play.

#### ITALIAN INFLUENCE ON THE WANE: 1642-1705

This whole-hearted enthusiasm for Italian things lasted at least till the closing of the theatres in 1642. With the forbidding Commonwealth and the cynical Restoration, however, a marked cloud fell over its eager face. In France the exiled cavaliers found new loves. They transferred their admiration from Italian character to French temperament, from Italian epics to French comedies, from Italian *bellezza* to French *beauté*. It was the custom of the French

in those days to cry up their rather new-found national eminence by crying down things Italian. As mistress, France would brook no rival, especially Italy—much of whose glory in the arts had indeed, by this time, departed—and England's attitude toward the old love was accordingly affected. The Elizabethan admiration for Italy had been too intense, however, to be sloughed overnight. It fell off slowly between 1642 and 1705.

On the stage the Elizabethan feeling for Italian character lingered in the form of a tradition which every once in a while, like a moribund volcano, threw up warmish pieces like Behn's *Amorous Prince*, Dryden's *Assignment*, Southerne's *Disappointment*, Wilson's *Belphegor*, Centlivre's *Perjur'd Husband*, or Rowe's *Fair Penitent*. In these the Italian continued to exhibit his well-known virtues and vices. In contrast with earlier times, however, the Restoration Italian angel was besmirched; the devil, bedraggled. The taint of mania had practically disappeared from his love and lust, his ambition, generosity, and revenge. Besides the French depreciation of Italian character, the very air of the Restoration encouraged a changed interpretation of Italian vices and virtues. If the former were represented as less monstrous, the latter as less heavenly, it was partly because the courtly wisdom of the time fostered both a kindly interpretation of vice and an affable diffidence about putting anybody's virtue to the acid test. This toned-down Italian may also be found in the chief travel books of the day from Lassels to Veryard.

The sand of the Elizabethan dramatic interest in Italian history ran slowly out with the anonymous *Religious-Rebell*,<sup>3</sup> Crowne's *Charles the Eighth of France*, Settle's *Female Prelate*, Lee's *Cæsar Borgia*, Otway's *Venice Preserv'd*, D'Urfey's *Rise and Fall of Massaniello*, and Gildon's *Patriot*.<sup>4</sup> These works were fed by translations from Capriata, Platina, Nani, Machiavelli, Leti, and Saint-Réal. In *The Lives of the Popes* Sir Paul Rycaut not only Englished but brought down to date Platina's well-known work.

It was in the realm of literature that the French disapproval of

<sup>3</sup> The villain is Gregory VII.

<sup>4</sup> The hero is Cosimo de' Medici, *Pater Patriæ*, often held by Englishmen to be a model of republican patriotism.



Italy operated most effectively to choke off the earlier interest. Deference to French literary taste made many Englishmen take the side of the ancients against the moderns in the famous quarrel which originated in France. In that brawl nearly every Italian poet of importance was badly wounded. Boileau, Rapin, Le Bossu, and Bouhours found that Italian poetry had not only violated the rules of Aristotle but had, from end to end, outraged the decorum and good sense required by Horace. The Italian poets were declared to lack "nature," and to be, to use the words of Shaftesbury, an heir of French critical opinion, "good for nothing but to corrupt the taste of those who have had no familiarity with the noble antients." The great Italian epics were said to violate Aristotle by lacking unity of action (Tasso excepted); to violate common sense by introducing magicians, giants, flame-tailed centaurs, and other freaks of nature into a sober, adult, Christian world; and to violate morality by drawing scenes of blasphemy and fornication. Thus fell Dante, Boiardo, Pulci, Ariosto, Marino. Tasso, by reason of his perfect design, fared a little better, though he was obviously guilty of gross enchantments and amorous scenes unworthy of the noble epic tone. With Marino, Tasso was said to share an unforgivable offense against good taste: the love of *concetti*, defined as far-fetched puns or wildly exaggerated similes and metaphors. *Concetti* were also held to be the besetting sin of the Italian lyric poets, and doomed to enlightened scorn the flights of Petrarch and his followers. Even in the heyday of his influence Petrarch, with his eternal heartburning over an icy mistress, had been in some quarters condemned as unmanly and un-English. The charge of false taste now finished him. Contemporary Italian romances were also condemned for their *concetti*, while the old *novelle* were often lumped together and dismissed as "unnaturally" licentious. Italian comedy was more or less fairly thrown out of court as extempore obscenity, while more serious Italian drama, threatening to revive and enthrall Europe in the form of opera, was held to be empty of thought and filled with emasculating melody. Italian literature, thus bludgeoned in France, was given rather ponderous burial by Rymer, Dryden, and later, Shaftesbury, Addison, and others. With one or two small exceptions in favor of Marino's *Strage degli innocenti*, Tasso's *Aminta*, and some prose romances, practically

no translations from Italian literature appeared between 1642 and 1705. Philip Ayres may be mentioned for his unconventional devotion to Petrarch. It must also be remembered that Boccaccio's stories, usually those of intrigue, continued to be made use of by dramatists like Mrs. Behn, Otway, and Ravenscroft. Dryden's versification of some of the weird, colorful, or tragic tales of this author in his *Fables* was something of an anomaly.

English awareness of Italian art and scenery remained much where it had been before. The landscape was still prized for its peaceful, fertile aspects, for set pieces like the bays of Naples and Genoa, or for the regular gardens of Isola Madre. Near the end of the century, however, John Dennis discovered a certain awesome delight in traversing the "horrid" mountains which shelter Italy on the north and divide the peninsula like a spine. This was a step forward.

In architecture D. I. Fontana, Iacopo Barozzi, and Andrea Palladio were admired and widely imitated. An effort, inspired by French example, was made to popularize painting in England. Balthasar Gerbier and Jean Gailhard urged travelling Englishmen to refine their manners by learning to appreciate Italian pictures. Men like Evelyn and Dryden, pleased to help advance this civilizing love of beauty in England, translated from the French of Fréard de Chambray and Dufresnoy certain *vade mecums* to the criticism of pictures. William Aglionby disclosed similar secrets of happiness in *Painting Illustrated in Three Dialogues*, to which he appended a translation of several of Vasari's lives of the painters. The subject was still further opened up by translations from the French of Monier and Piles. All these works tended, however, to oversubtilize the enjoyment of painting by calling on the spectator to judge each picture with reference to ideals of Invention, Proportion, Color, Chiaroscuro, Motion, Collocation, and so on. Those artists who came nearest to perfection in several of these departments were generally supposed to have been Raphael, Correggio, Romano, Reni, the Carracci, Titian, and Veronese. Any Restoration Englishman who felt equal to a proper appreciation of their merits had *The Painter's Voyage of Italy*, translated from Barri by William Lodge, to guide him to the masterpieces. But, apparently, few felt equal to the ordeal.

ITALIAN INFLUENCE RESISTED AND ALMOST OBLITERATED  
1705-1755

It seems to have been Addison with his quietly scornful *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1705) who finally succeeded in damning the Italian, with most things belonging to him, into a hell from which he was completely resurrected only by the ardent singing of Shelley and the other Orpheuses of the Romantic Movement. Bishop Burnet and several French writers preceded him in arraiguing the Italian and his works, but it was probably Addison with his literary and moral prestige, resulting in a long list of editions, who pronounced sentence. In his day Englishmen seem to have become more painfully aware than ever before that they themselves, compared with most Europeans, were uniquely rich, uniquely enlightened, uniquely moral, and uniquely free. These peculiarly English virtues soon came to seem the *only* virtues, and foreigners were forced to stand or fall by comparison with them. The Italian, who had been for some time tottering, fell hard. At last the gentleman of Europe was down. Englishmen were horrified that they had ever been imposed on by his meretricious charms. He was like a poor relation—ignorant, superstitious, slavish, expecting his decayed beauty to cover his dubious morals. England disowned him and his works. Perhaps it was outraged decency, perhaps it was a sense of indebtedness to this tawdry creature, that made England disown him with so much animosity and rancor between 1705 and 1755.

Many Englishmen began actually to despise the Italian's character. They could find practically no remnants of his ancient virtues. As for his vices, they were now seen to be, not picturesque jealousy, ambition, and revenge, but mere ignorance, poverty, robbery, socialized adultery, and slavish submission to tyrants. Pretending to judge the Italian by reason and common sense, the early eighteenth-century travellers gave way to vituperation which was based on self-righteousness, propped by self-sufficiency, weighted with the kind of patriotism called insular, and pointed by snobbery. Not only was the Italian hopelessly sunk in poverty, squalor, superstition, murder, and slavery, said travellers and poets; he basely consoled himself for these ills with enervating music

and a social system which made adultery an obligation for both sexes. The poets who paraphrased Addison's *Letter from Italy* included, among a host, Mrs. Monck, Thomson, and Goldsmith. It is no wonder that, under this attack on his character, the Italian practically disappeared from English plays and stories. Of the few dramas that introduced him, none is now remembered; while *Sir Charles Grandison* is, so far as I know, the only important English novel of the time to give him prominence.

The same blight which fell on Italian character, seen as a subject for imaginative literature, now overtook Italian history. An age which believed in reason, honesty, and a bridle for the passions was disgusted with the ambitious crimes of petty Italian tyrants, shocked at the sexual perversity which usually lay at the bottom of their "domestic tragedies," and rendered incapable of believing that the slavish Italians of its day could have descended from noble patriots. The "useful parts" of history were cried up, and "general truths" made to prevail at the expense of poetry. Two or three Englishmen, including Francis Midon, Alexander Gordon, and Archibald Bower, took to writing Italian history in these days, but more for its lesson than its color. If we except Thomson's *Tancred and Sigismunda*, laid in Norman Sicily, we may affirm, I think, that practically no poems or plays on Italian history appeared in these sandy days.

The case with Italian literature was, by contrast, a little better. French criticism still held it down, but it showed signs of resistance. It is necessary to observe first of all, however, that the particular branch of Italian literature to receive most favor in England in these days was that composed in the Latin tongue. As Englishmen gradually came to see themselves as the heirs not only of the republican virtues, but also of the imperial glories, of old Rome, their enthusiasm for Latin overflowed on all works written in that beloved language. This fondness for Latinized Italian literature had begun to show itself at the end of the seventeenth century when Tate translated Fracastoro's *Syphilis*. Now it resulted in English versions of practically all the important Latin poems composed by Sannazzaro, Vida, Flaminio, and others. Vida's *Bombyx* and *Scacchia Ludus* were translated two or three

times each. Next to the Latin poems, Italian burlesque or satirical works seem to have enjoyed some popularity. John Ozell translated a couple of cantos of Tassoni's *Secchia rapita* in time to lend suggestions to Pope's *Rape of the Lock*. Parts of Ariosto's *Orlando*, usually the ribald or satirical, were translated by John Gay and others, while his satires were edited by Rolli. Rolli also edited a London edition of the chief Italian satirists.

A person looking for signs of what may be called romantic interest in Italian literature in these days will not be entirely disappointed. Two or three minor poets, following Dryden's lead, versified some of the more colorful tales from Boccaccio, and at least two plays were modelled on his stories of tragic hate and superhuman generosity. Two or three poetesses, headed by Mrs. Rowe, translated from the Italian lyrists, usually avoiding, however, Petrarch. Those represented, in entirely negligible verse, included Della Casa, Guarini, Marino, and Filicaia. More substantial were the English versions of definitely colorful or pathetic episodes from Dante and Tasso. In 1719 the elder Jonathan Richardson produced the first avowed English translation from Dante—a blank-verse version of the Ugolino episode—in which he was followed by Gray (about 1738), whose poems also show an acquaintance with certain Italian lyrists. But it was perhaps Tasso who kept the love of Italian poetry alive in England in these trying times. In spite of his "clinquant," discovered by Boileau and scorned by Addison, it was possible, even for a person of taste, to admire one or two things about the *Gerusalemme liberata*. To be sure, those who read it for its regular beauties of plan were in danger of falling into the superstitious snares of Ismeno; those who read it for the noble sentiments of Godfrey, in danger of tripping into the ignominious, however beautiful, arms of Armida. And such, it seems, was sometimes the case. Mrs. Rowe led off with short versions of some of the spookiest and most sensuous passages, and was soon followed by four poets who translated from one to three cantos apiece. At the same time new or revised translations of the pastorals of Tasso and Guarini kept Englishmen from altogether forgetting that Italy had a theatre, a point strengthened by the European celebrity of Maffei's *Merope*, twice

translated, and buttressed by the appearance of Metastasio and Goldoni in the second quarter of the century. All this persistent interest in a literature condemned by the current classical criticism is, for people of our peculiar interests, mildly promising.

The outlook for Italian art and scenery in 1755 was also fair. Palladio was admired as usual. Though the elder Jonathan Richardson found his countrymen still scandalously ignorant of the "Science of a Connoisseur" in 1719, he seems not to have left them so. He expounded the pleasures of art criticism with a conviction that stirred his lethargic compatriots to action. The next thirty-five years saw the appearance of three or four good guides to the works of art in Italy. Dufresnoy was thrice translated, and the critical works of Piles again laid under contribution. Charles Lamotte wrote *An Essay upon Poetry and Painting*, and Gray compiled lists of the principal painters of the chief Italian schools. Poets tossed off verses showing their acquaintance with the leading characteristics of the most famous artists: Raphael's design, Titian's color, Correggio's chiaroscuro, and Reni's grace. Walter Harte and John Whaley composed verse "Essays on Painting," partly didactic, partly historical, and partly critical. It remains true, however, that our writers could not give themselves whole-heartedly to the enjoyment of Italian art. The early eighteenth-century rage for good taste and nature was a thing with which men often plagued themselves. Enlightened travellers could not stomach pictures guilty of "incorrect" anatomy or historical solecism. Addison gloated over finding six fingers on a single hand in one of Veronese's best pictures. One after another, almost without exception, the great Italian artists were derided for having introduced St. Jerome into a "Last Supper," St. Francis into a "Crucifixion," or St. Benedict into a "Marriage in Cana." Naked figures, being false to moral if not to physical truth, were often thought to be in bad taste. Michelangelo's terrific nudes were said to violate the truths of nature and morality alike. In a word, Italian art still had some of its way to make in England in 1755.

Though the peaceful, fertile aspects of Italian scenery continued favorites, a close inspection will reveal a slowly growing taste for its wild, desolate, and "sublime" traits. Addison himself had stood

excited on the spot from which Childe Harold was, more than a hundred years later, to address his Farewell to Ocean. Mallet, Thomson, and Dyer at least mentioned those bleak mountains and grand cascades for which Italy later became so famous. These were also enjoyed by travellers like Walpole and Gray, the latter of whom seems to have displayed an active and forward-looking, if not very profound or abundantly expressed, interest in nearly every aspect of Italian beauty. In her book, *Italian Landscape in Eighteenth Century England* (1925), Elizabeth Wheeler Manwaring attributes this growing admiration for the wilder aspects of Italian scenery to the popularity of Salvator Rosa and other painters. Meanwhile, it remains a fact that the love of Italian nature, from the point of view either of the literature or the philosophical interpretation of the subject, had not come very far by 1755. Of the attitude, or attitudes, of Byron and Shelley there was as yet no definite prelude.

Having traced throughout this chapter how all things Italian—character, history, literature, and the fine arts—fell into bad, often very bad, odor with Englishmen, let us now see what we can do to get them out. For they did get out, as we all know. They got out into the light of the Romantic Movement. They furnished that movement with an important source of inspiration and illustration. It is because of the very important part which they played in this famous renaissance of English poetry that the story of their gradual resurrection in English literature is worth recording.

Let us see how Dante, Pulci, Petrarch, Rienzi, Parisina, the Medici, and so many others crept into the bosom of English literature and warmed what they reposed on.

II  
THE ANTI-ITALIAN TIDE IS STEMMED  
1755-1770





## PART II

### THE ANTI-ITALIAN TIDE IS STEMMED: 1755-1770

A "romantic" interest in Italy, for the purposes of our discussion, may be defined so as to include one or more of the following elements: a deep affection for Italians themselves, based on what we must call, for want of a better word, their "sensibility" of character; a wish to make them happier through the establishment of liberal, if not republican, forms of government; a sense of the dramatic possibilities of their history; a flair for the strong pathos, supernatural hanky-panky, and brilliant color of their literature; and a disposition to discover in their fine arts and scenery hints of a beauty even greater than that which meets the eye. Only the history of criticism can explain why we should choose to call such interests in Italy "romantic." With regard to most of them, anyone who chooses may substitute for "romantic" the words "all too human." Because such interests were usually different from, and sometimes wholly opposed to, the early eighteenth-century—classic or Augustan—attitude toward Italy, we designate them, in accord with a critical usage now too time-honored to be resisted, "romantic." The aim of this part of our study is to isolate some of the earliest appearances of these interests in eighteenth-century literature.

#### EDWARD CLARKE: A POET TRIES TO FLOAT A FEW VERSES ON THE ANTI-ITALIAN TIDE: 1755

The romantic attitude toward things Italian was, as everyone knows, extremely productive of poetry. Let us look for just a minute at what the mid-eighteenth-century attitude, with its disapproval of Italians, neglect of their literature, ignorance of their history, and qualified admiration of their art and scenery, could produce in the way of poetry. Edward Clarke, the author of *A Letter to a Friend in Italy* (1755), was the son of a well-known antiquary. After receiving his M.A. from Cambridge in 1755, he

was made Rector of Peperharow, Surrey, in 1758. From the slight internal evidence of the poem he seems to have been a kindly gentleman, anxious to say the best he could of things Italian. His poem, published with another, makes a thin quarto of twenty-two pages. We feel that the author would, if possible, have made it longer. Had he lived in 1825 he would, perhaps, have published a fat volume of verse like Rogers' or Sotheby's. In 1755, however, the anti-Italian sentiment and the ignorance of his time left him little to say.

There is the charm of the fertile soil, of course:

. . . I own *Italia's* Fields possess  
A strong Circean Charm, a magic Force,  
That brings a sweet *Nepenthé* on the Soul. . .<sup>1</sup>

This "fond Oblivion" is not, of course, to be too far indulged. No free-born Englishman will let himself forget that the beautiful countryside is a painted sepulcher:

What though her Presses run with richest Juice,  
Pour'd from each flow'ry Dale and Vine-clad Hill;  
Yet Liberty thou seek'st, to grace the Scene, . . .  
Yet Superstition's Clouds you'd chase away,  
And burst the Chain that holds the servile Throng.

We must not interpret the last line to mean that Clarke would have his travelling friend start bursting Italia's chains; he merely wishes to indicate that a Briton cannot fully enjoy beauty shadowed by tyranny. This ironical praise of Italian scenery was probably suggested by Addison's *Letter from Italy*. It is interesting to note, however, that Clarke improves on Addison's irony by peopling the misleading landscape with famous figures (long dead!) of whom the older poet was either ignorant or oblivious. Thus he praises the now ignominious Arno for having once

slak'd the Thirst of mighty Bards,  
Of *Danté*<sup>2</sup> and *Boccacio*, deathless Names. . .

<sup>1</sup> All quotations are reproduced exactly except for the modernization of such punctuation as might worry the reader, and the very infrequent correction (not modernization) of printers' errors. First editions have almost invariably been used.

<sup>2</sup> Not in Toynbee's *Dante in English Literature*.

From this point he passes on to a long eulogy of *ancient Italy*, ending with a brief review of the revival of arts and letters in the Renaissance, a subject popularized by Pope in the *Essay on Criticism*. Here again the imitator seems to be a little better informed than his predecessor. After telling how the "Fond, *Legendary Bards*" of Provence first roused "the sleeping *Lyres of Italy*," he says:

Then to dispel these Shades, and Northern Mists,  
*Boiardo, Tasso, Ariosto*, rose,  
 And *Petrarch*, Father of her laurell'd Sons. . .

While this is all he has to say of Petrarch and the great poetic *romanzatori*, he does not fail to note that, as a climax to these mere Italian-writing poets,

*Castalio, Sannazar, and Vida* came,  
*Flaminius, Bembo, Fracastor*, and thou,  
*Naugerius*, glorious Band of tuneful Bards!  
 Who wak'd the sounding String, restor'd the Fame .  
 Of antient Song, and bad the Hills of *Rome*  
 Shake with the Pow'r of mighty Melody.

To admire the Latin poets of Italy was, as I pointed out in the first chapter, quite proper for a person of taste in 1755; nor were certain of the Italian painters to be entirely frowned upon. Thus Clarke felt free to assign to each of the more esteemed artists his conventionally accepted excellence:

Then *Raphael's* animated Canyas glow'd,  
 And old *Romano* own'd his happier Touch;  
*Corregio's* Pencil soften'd into Life  
 The blended Colours; *Paulo's* Attitudes  
 The Skill and Freedom of his Hand declar'd;  
*Caracci's* nervous Figures stood confest;  
 While *Titian's* Beauties ev'ry Bosom warm'd;  
 And *Guido's* graceful Air the Gazer struck.<sup>a</sup>

The only Italian patriots, popes, or princes named by Clarke are those who fostered the famous revival of art and learning. Pope having sounded the praises of "Leo's golden Days," Clarke

<sup>a</sup> Note the omission of Michelangelo.

took occasion to celebrate the patronage of his great-grandfather, Cosimo,<sup>4</sup> *Pater Patriæ*, in a passage which suggests that he had taken to heart the lesson of Humphrey Hody's *De Græcis Illustribus*.

When grim visag'd War  
Led on proud *Mahomet's* barbaric Host  
To sack *Byzantium*, at the distant View . . .  
The awful Genius of old *Greece* and *Rome*  
Fled trembling; and in *Cosmo's* Mansions sought  
The wish'd *Asylum*. . .  
Thee! *Cosmo!* thee! propitious Gods restor'd,  
Exil'd by Envy and loud Faction's Voice,  
To raise thy City's and thy Country's Fame. . .  
By thee the *Grecian* Glory rose again,  
The *Roman* Genius at thy Call awoke,  
Burst from its Trance, and imp'd its eagle Wings.

Thus much, and no more, had Clarke to say of Italian character, manners, history, literature, and art. It is not necessary for me to emphasize that all these fields, with the exception of Latin poetry and high Renaissance painting, are entirely neglected. But one feels, I think, that Clarke loved his subject. He liked to dream of his friend lounging through Italy, saturating himself in the aroma of great things accomplished. The exact nature of those things was to become clearer to Englishmen during the years from 1755 to 1770. It was also to become clear that Italian accomplishments did not all lie in the past. Last of all, English poets were to begin to feel strangely drawn toward these accomplishments, whether past, present, or to come.

#### GIUSEPPE BARETTI: ITALIAN LITERATURE DEFENDED: 1753-1757

When Clarke hailed Dante and Boccaccio as "deathless Names" in 1755, he may have been merely complimenting them on having hammered early Italian dialects into an efficient literary language,

<sup>4</sup>In spelling Italian names I try to follow what appears to be the most widely accepted modern usage, though this is often difficult to determine. In my quotations, however, I adhere strictly to the spelling of my authors. I trust the contrasts will entertain rather than confuse the reader.

or he may have meant something more. For of late years Dante and the literature he fathered had begun to find defenders against the French classical criticism of Rapin, Boileau, and Voltaire. These had been chiefly Italian teachers of their native language in London, roused to indignation by the young Voltaire's *Essay on the Epick Poetry of the Modern European Nations* (1727). In this work, written in English, Voltaire had denied the title of epic poet to all Italian writers with the possible exception of Trissino and Tasso, of the latter of whom he seems to have been quite fond. The first defense of the abused poets, Paolo Rolli's *Remarks upon M. Voltaire's Essay* (1728), having fallen flat, it remained for another Italian teacher, Giuseppe Baretti, to rouse English sympathy for the maligned poets of his country. It is just possible that Clarke called Dante and Boccaccio "deathless" because of the contagious enthusiasm of Baretti for their works themselves.

In 1751 Giuseppe Baretti, born in Turin in 1719, came in consequence of a literary quarrel to London, where he set up a school for teaching Italian. Now the London demand for Italian masters was already fully supplied, chiefly by Evangelista Palermo, who published a grammar in 1755, and Vincenzo Martinelli, who tutored many of the nobility. In order to make a place for himself by enlarging the demand for his none too popular subject, Baretti began almost immediately to publish a series of books in defense of Italian literature. Soon he made the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson, by whom he was introduced to most of the distinguished writers and artists in London, among them Sir Joshua Reynolds, to whom he sat for his portrait. Dr. Johnson seems to have had a high respect for his Italian friend, apparently finding in his active mind certain manly, straightforward qualities akin to his own. Baretti, famous in his own language for the vigor of his prose, affected in most of his English writings a Johnsonesque style. This, representing the height of urbanity in expression in those days, enabled him to attract widespread attention to his defense of Italian literature against the still prevailing classical criticism, long ago imported from France. It is hardly necessary to say that Baretti needed every possible weapon in his fight. What he tried to do was nothing less than make Englishmen believe that the true criterion of poetic

greatness was, not the skill to please the mind by conforming to the rules and balancing expert epithets, but the power to move the heart by describing the passions and drawing brilliant word pictures.

Baretti's first attempt to vindicate and popularize Italian literature seems to have been made very soon after he took up residence in London. In 1751 he wrote "to an English Gentleman at Turin" a letter published in 1753 as *Remarks on the Italian Language and Writers*. In this letter he made a series of points about the chief Italian writers of the past and present which he repeated over and over in his critical works, most notably in his *Dissertation upon the Italian Poetry, in Which Are Interspersed Some Remarks on Mr. Voltaire's Essay on the Epick Poets* (1753) and in his *Italian Library, Containing an Account of the Lives and Works of the Most Valuable Authors of Italy* (1757). His *Introduction to the Italian Language, Containing Specimens Both of Prose and Verse* (1755) was an anthology of passages from his favorite Italian authors, intended to illustrate his critical estimates. These estimates I shall outline from the three works mentioned above, emphasizing the *Remarks on the Italian Language and Writers* because it came first in time and is least known.

Baretti was rather fond of tracing the rise of the modern Italian language, and underscoring the historical importance of Dante and Boccaccio in that process. His most important contribution to this subject was the preface to his *Italian Library*, in which he exhibited "the Changes of the TUSCAN Language from the barbarous Ages to the present Time." However, the idea that "*Dante's polish'd Page*"<sup>5</sup> had initiated an age favorable to Italian letters was not altogether new to Englishmen. What was new was Baretti's claim that Italian literary history was studded with dozens of important, not to say great, names of which most Englishmen had never so much as heard. What Baretti brought to England for the first time was an intimate picture of an accomplished Italian writer understanding, enjoying, and assessing his native literature with an acumen, assurance, and sincerity which threw into sharp contrast the superficial French judgments so long in vogue.

<sup>5</sup> See Dryden's lines, "To the Earl of Roscommon, on his Excellent Essay on Translated Verse," prefixed to the first edition of the *Essay* (1684).

Englishmen had almost always heard that Dante was harsh, obscure, obscene, dull, blasphemous, and too highly irregular to be classed as an epic poet at all. Now they heard an Italian speak from depths of extensive learning and feeling: "Of all our Poetic Writers *Dante of Alighieri* is, in my opinion, the greatest."<sup>6</sup> In his *Remarks* (1753), from which I have just quoted, Baretti made out that Dante—"that sprite, or that seraph"—was a great genius, whose fertile invention had struck out a path which, if not ideal, was at least adapted to the expression of his powers. In his *Dissertation* (1753), largely devoted to Dante, he defended him and other Italian poets from the "dull Insensibility, profound Ignorance, or jealous Ingenuity" which originally led the French to adopt "the extravagant and unjust Censure by which they have so long injur'd my Countrymen." It was not fair of them, he said, to heap on Dante, Ariosto, and other great poets criticism merited, perhaps, by Marino. With his overwrought poetry Marino has caused all Italian literature to be accused of mannerism and unmanliness. In order to refute these unjust charges as conclusively as possible, Baretti gave a short account of the *Divina commedia*, translating into prose many striking passages from the *Inferno*, including, of course, the episode of Ugolino in the Tower of Famine, already turned into English verse, as we have seen, by Richardson and Gray. From his translation of the Ugolino passage we may quote a few lines, beginning where the distracted father tells how he gnawed his fist with rage and grief:

"My Children, believing I did this through Eagerness to eat, raising themselves up, said to me, 'Dear Father! our Torments would be less if you would allay the Rage of your Hunger upon us. It is you who have clothed us with this miserable Flesh; now then, divest us of it!' I restrained myself that I might not increase their Misery. We were mute that Day and the following. Ah, cruel Earth, why did'st thou not swallow us at once! The fourth Day being come, *Gaddo*, falling extended at my Feet, cried, 'My Father, why do you not help me?' and died. The other three expired one after another between the fifth and sixth Days, famished as thou seest me now. And I, being seized with Blindness, began to go groping upon them with my Hands and Feet. I continued calling them by

<sup>6</sup> Not in Toynbee.



their Names during three Days after they were dead. Then Hunger vanquished my Grief!"

Baretti hoped his English readers would agree that this was strong poetic pabulum. In summarizing his view of Dante he maintained that "the Thirty-four Cantos of *Dante's Hell* are wrote with more Virility of Thought and Vigour of Stile than any other Poem, antient or modern; and in this Particular no Nation has Produced its Equal, except the *Paradise Lost* of Milton." Everyone must agree that in the *Inferno* "Dante is wonderful in painting the Passions, and making lively Representations of Objects. . ." In addition, everyone must agree that "there is no Poet in *Italy* (deservedly called the Mother of sweet Poets) so sweet, so harmonious, and so affecting as *Dante* in his Description of Paradise. Nor is this a French Exaggeration for which any Allowance is to be made. . ." If Dante mixed pagan fable with Christian history, sometimes descended to meanness of style, and neglected the "rules," his faults are referable to the time in which he lived. "That Spirit of Method and Geometry that hath taken Possession, for more than an Age, of the Poetry of the principal *European Nations* could not be found in the Time of *Dante*, as he was the *first* great Poet and great Writer." Here were statements for the English reader to ponder. If they were found true, it would be necessary for Englishmen to revise radically that attitude toward Italian poetry which gave Tasso a practical monopoly of beauty.

Then there is another Italian poet of uncommon genius, he said, though practically unheard of in England—Luigi Pulci. In the *Remarks* Baretti held that this writer was, though sometimes coarse, clownish, and even unintelligible, a lively painter of character, passions, and pictures. The champion of his native literature professed himself transported with the "odd character of *Margutte*, the *Tent of Luciana*, the *Battle of Roncesvaux*, the *Death of Roland*." In the preface to *The Italian Library* he quoted Orlando's "mournful and devout prayer" after Roncesvalles with the comment that Pulci's poem, the *Morgante Maggiore*, "in my opinion, may cope with those of *Bojardo* and *Ariosto* for power and variety of poetical thinking."

In spite of the fact that Clarke mentioned his name in 1755, Boiardo himself was in these days practically unknown in England. In the *Remarks* Baretti said that the Count of Scandiano had a fine imagination for romantic situations. He seems to have been glad, however, that the *Orlando innamorato* had been "new-moulded and burlesqued by the inimitable Berni." In *The Italian Library* he declared that "Boiardo was the greatest inventor that Italy ever produced; and if *Berni's rifacimento* was not stained with many immoralities, it would be the most pleasing poetical thing in our language." He did not specify his favorite passages, but we may suppose that they included the ghastly adventure of the Castle of Altaripa, the weird adventure of the Lake of the Fairy Morgana, and the magnanimous adventure of the Garden of Medusa. He left Englishmen to dig these beauties out for themselves. In the *Remarks* he declared that Berni's "moral" introductions to the various cantos often excelled those of Ariosto.

The virtues of this latter poet Baretti now proceeded to set in a right light. Ariosto's true greatness had too long been smothered under French cries of absurd, improbable, and trivial. His reputation had been too long overshadowed by that of Tasso. Now Italians, said Baretti, have always recognized Ariosto's clear superiority over his successor. Practically the only fault Baretti could see in this poet was his failure to give the *Orlando* a rather more orderly plan. In the *Remarks* he wrote: "The variety of his characters, the frequency of his comparisons, his most lively and natural descriptions, make me consider him as a miraculous poet: I can think of no other epithet so proper." The episode of Orlando's madness seemed to him "the finest, and at the same time, the boldest thing that ever entered the imagination of a poet." In *The Italian Library* he said: "Nations owe the chief power and beauties of their languages to their poets; but few nations, either ancient or modern, owe so much to a single genius as the Italian to *Lodovico Ariosto*. . ." His fame, born with the first publication of his book, has, "sun-like, . . . constantly shone with an equal lustre, and is as bright in our days as it was two hundred years ago." "It would take too much room to expatiate on each particular excellence or defect of this poem, or to fix the degree

of contempt the French critics in general have deserved whenever they spoke of *Ariosto*. . . . [T]he pitiful decisions they have uttered whenever they have compared our *Orlando* to our *Gerusalemme* prove their perfect ignorance of our language and epic poetry, as well as the impudence of their temper." Baretto never seemed able to make up his mind as to whether Dante or Ariosto deserved to be called the greatest genius of his nation. Tasso, of course, Baretto did not entirely belittle, allowing that his characters, sentiments, and descriptions are often done "with great force and propriety." He merely wished to emphasize, once for all, that Tasso is inferior to Ariosto "as to knowledge of language, variety of invention, rapidity of expression, picture of manners, and general powers of delighting. . ." Baretto undoubtedly disapproved more strongly of Tasso than he would have, had Voltaire not condescended to praise all parts of the *Gerusalemme* which did not smack "too much of Ariosto. . ." French and British critics should not have presumed, he said, to exalt Tasso and Trissino above all other Italian poets merely because they observed certain of the "rules." In *The Italian Library* he took his own countryman, Gravina, to task for a similar offense. You cannot weigh poetic merit in the scales of Aristotle. "*Ariosto, Pulci, Dante, Berni*, and some others did not quite conform to Aristotle's precepts, yet consult your heart, rather than Aristotle, when you read them, and you will find them to be poets. They will make you feel it in spite of the most subtle critick. . ." One essential of good poetry is, indeed, originality, which implies a certain disregard of rules. As contrasted with Tasso, wrote Baretto in the *Remarks*, Dante, Boiardo, Pulci, and Ariosto are "so truly original that I sincerely think they are not inferior to, but even excel, the greatest of *Greek* and *Latin* Poets."

Here, as I said before, was something for Englishmen to think about. Baretto, though he opposed the heart to the head in matters of literary judgment, was not to be dismissed as brainless. Some of his weight he rested on a certain Italian critical tradition, while the rest he was perfectly capable of sustaining in his own right in impressive, if rather quaintly expressed, after-dinner controversies.

<sup>1</sup> *Essay on the Epick Poetry of the Modern European Nations* (1727).

After finding good things to say about the mock heroism of Tassoni's *Secchia rapita*, Folengo's *Orlandino*, and Bracciolini's *Scherno degli dei*, Baretti was sorry to have to tell English readers that Italian literature was not so rich in good comedies and tragedies as in epic poems. In *The Italian Library*, however, he gave long lists of Italian dramas, sometimes accompanied by criticisms echoed from his earlier *Remarks*. In comedy he paid some praise to Ariosto, the younger Buonarroti, and Niccolò Amenta, affirming that "no nation can be compared with us for pleasantry and humour in comedy; and a foreigner cannot read anything more elegant as to language than our old plays, especially those written by Florentine authors; but . . . he will not be edified by their morals." In tragedy he signalized Tasso for his *Torrismondo* and Gasparo Gozzi for his *Elettra*. He failed, however, to relish the eighteenth-century tragedies of Maffei, Gravina, Lazzarini, and others because "*not written in rhyme*" (see *Remarks*); and admitted that "Our tragical ancient poets generally want elevation and fire, and, on this head, it is my opinion that we are not only inferior to the English, but to the French themselves." Among the Italian pastoral plays he enjoyed Tasso's *Aminta* but found it hard to put up with the amorous insipidities of the *Pastor fido* and the *Filli di Sciro*. Metastasio's libretti he held to be good dramatic poems of the tragi-comical kind. In his *Remarks* he observed that though Metastasio is "at little pains to draw his characters as represented in history," his plays are redeemed by "the harmonious flow of his verse, and his many natural and sublime thoughts." In the preface to *The Italian Library* he emphasized the point that "the most judicious part of our readers like Metastasio's verses better without than with musick. . ." He even affirmed "his invention of characters and interesting situations almost equal to that of Shakespear and Corneille, and his knowledge of passions not inferior to his invention."

In one of his first tutorial connections in London—that with Mrs. Lennox, who introduced him to Johnson—Baretti helped that authoress with *Shakespear Illustrated; or, The Novels and Histories on Which the Plays . . . Are Founded, Collected and Translated* (chiefly Vol. I, 1753). While Baretti praised their sense of color and romance, he found it necessary to tax nearly all the old

*novelle*-writers with improper morals. He did not consider it expedient, however, to omit any of their works from his *catalogue raisonné* of 1757. "I do not chuse to drop any of our novelists of note, that the curiosity of the reader may be satisfied about this class of our writers, which is the most celebrated, but the worst, in the right signification of the word." This curiosity, we may mention, was strong enough to give rise to contemporary British editions of Grazzini (1756) and Boccaccio (1762).<sup>a</sup>

As for the lyric poets of Italy, Baretti failed to make as much of them as he easily might have. He seems to have had little fondness for their particular form of self-expression. In the *Remarks* he said he was sorry to hear Petrarch more often mentioned in English conversation than Dante, for these poets stood, he thought, in the same relation to each other as the sonnet to the epic poem—the relation, that is, of a fly to an elephant. Other lyristis mentioned in the *Remarks* are Cino da Pistoia, Dante da Maiano, Chiabrera, Fillicaia, and Guidi. To this list he added in *The Italian Library* notices of Giusto de' Conti, Serafino d'Aquila, Lorenzo de' Medici, Tebaldeo, G. Guidiccioni, Alamanni, Michelangelo, Sannazzaro, Rota, Vittoria Colonna, and some others. Among modern Italian poets his favorites were Passeroni and Metastasio. In his *Introduction to the Italian Language* he gave select sonnets and *canzoni* from Michelangelo, Poliziano, Lorenzo de' Medici, Fracastoro, Della Casa, and Petrarch. Poems by Guittone d'Arezzo, Dante da Maiano, Guido Cavalcanti, Cina da Pistoia, Chiabrera, Metastasio, and Passeroni were quoted in the introduction to *The Italian Library*.

In a word, said Baretti, Italian literature, so long misunderstood, reviled, and neglected in England, yields to none in power and beauty. The Italian poets of the past were masters of the great poetical secrets of strong characterization, sweet pathos, moral wisdom, and vivid imagery. Those of the present are not by any means negligible. In Italian literature Englishmen may discover, as it were, a new spiritual world. As a guide and chart to this world Baretti furnished them with a fine Italian *Dictionary* (1760, including a *Grammar*, separately published in 1762),

<sup>a</sup> There was also a Paris edition bearing a London imprint (1757).

which, in a revised form, is still used in England. Armed with these, they accepted his invitation to the high adventure. His love of his native poets seems to have been contagious. When he published his *Remarks on the Italian Language and Writers*, it was more than a hundred and fifty years since an Englishman had translated a major epic from the Italian. When he died in London in 1789, Ariosto, Tasso, and Dante had been wholly translated, the first three times, the second twice, and the latter once, with three separate versions of the *Inferno*. Dozens of literary men and students testify in prefaces and letters to Baretti's widespread influence in reviving, fostering, and advancing what we may call the "romantic" love of Italian literature in England during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Consult your heart, he had said, not Aristotle.

WILLIAM HUGGINS AND OTHERS: ARIOSTO TRANSLATED  
1754-1759\*

On 8 August, 1754, Baretti wrote to his friend, Candido Agudio of Milan:

I am just back from the country, where I have been spending two months with a gentleman of quality who, after reading my English Dissertation upon Dante, sent his chaplain to London to inquire about the author, bidding him to fetch me to him by fair means or by foul, as he had something to tell me. So I went, and when I got there, he informed me that he had been working for twenty years at a translation of Ariosto into "ottava rima." He had just finished it, but did not dare publish it till it had been seen by some one like myself. We spent forty days comparing it with the original, working like niggers, in order to perfect it as much as possible; but on the first day after my arrival, when we had scarcely read fifty stanzas, he was so pleased with my remarks and the corrections I suggested that he gave me a watch worth some fifty guineas, according to what the watchmakers tell me here. When I left, he paid for my journey both ways, and gave me a forty-guinea note, which was most welcome. But this is not all. He has even presented me with a house and garden adjoining his park for my whole life. . . In short, the good man is so possessed by Ariosto, and finds me such an agreeable companion

\* Dates of section, as contrasted with those of chapter, headings are inclusive.

in his hobby, that he is overjoyed at having made my acquaintance, and has completely lost his head, insisting on doing me every good turn in his power. In a few days his translation will be printed, with the original beside it, and a preface of mine in English; and if all goes well, I am to have the chief share of the profits, for this fine gentleman only desires the glory for himself.<sup>10</sup>

This ardent enthusiast for Italian poetry was William Huggins of Headly Park, Hampshire. Before retiring to this estate about 1750, Huggins, born in 1696, had been a fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and Wardrobe-Keeper at Hampton Court. Early in life, perhaps in connection with a trip to Italy, he became enamored of Ariosto, to whom he later raised in his park "an hexagonal temple," over the "Gothic Arches" of which he inscribed:

Per me se n' va l'incerto Viandante;  
Qui non s'alberga un orribil Gigante,  
Nè della Fata Alcina il bel Sembiante;  
Castello non son io del Mago Atlante;  
Ma, benchè rozzon Cumulo, son posto  
Pegno d'Amor verso il Divino Ariosto.

Just how he came by his great love of Ariosto in an age so critically unfavorable to that writer is rather mysterious—almost as mysterious, indeed, as the explanation of the thing we call character. For nothing short of a kind of emotional predisposition to chivalric adventure, grand and gloomy images, and the diversified chime of *ottava rima* can, I think, have made Huggins so oblivious to the current critical demands for unity of design, probability of adventure, and riming couplets in epic poetry. He was as full-fledged a romantic lover of Italian literature as any who appeared in England by 1750. To most of his contemporaries he must have seemed slightly mad, and indeed his disorderly prose and poetry sometimes make him seem so to us. William Stewart Rose affirmed that Huggins "was passionately devoted to music, and was said . . . to have been the person who figures in Hogarth's picture as the Enraged Musician." Though his strained and burst-

<sup>10</sup> Translated in Lacy Collison-Morley's *Giuseppe Baretti, with an Account of His Literary Friendships and Feuds in England in the Days of Dr. Johnson* (1909).

ing thoughts suggest the *enragé* well enough, it is impossible to connect his harsh, often illiterate, poetry with musicianship. It is only fitting, perhaps, that our first notably romantic English lover of Italian literature should have been a "wretched enthusiast"; not at all so, that he should have been a wretched writer.

When the translation of Ariosto appeared in 1755, it bore the name of no translator. The dedication to George II was, however, signed by Temple Henry Croker, who seems to have translated a few of the cantos, perhaps as many as eight. The preface, in which Baretti undoubtedly had a large hand, explains why the author embarked on this arduous translation, and exalts Ariosto, in the teeth of the French critics and at the expense of Tasso, to the skies. I was distressed, says Huggins, that "this Hesperian fruit should be untasted, this delicious Paradise not to be enjoyed by all the intelligent world, and more especially by my own country." Deprecating Harington's Elizabethan version as unfaithful and unfair to the original—it is "very scarce, and the glorious original much more so in this country"—he promises to give a faithful, line-for-line translation, "so that *Ariosto* is not only himself set before you, but even his dress: and though the attitude and pencilling should be in the cold *Dutch* stile instead of the *Italian* fire, yet have I known a bad picture pardoned because it carried a *great*, though perhaps not a *good*, likeness." As for the reputation of the original, he (or rather, Baretti) affirms that Ariosto "remains the delight, the glory of *Ii*aly, and the uncontested *monarch* of Italian poetry." Tasso's jealousy of him, we are told, used to make the former, "in an emulous poetic rage, tear out the leaves of *Ariosto* with his teeth, as if he had a mind to *destroy* that poet, whom, he was certain, he could never *outdo*." Huggins is willing to agree with Ruscelli who will "not allow this divine author to have committed so much as one single lapse." He thinks that, "with proper attention to his whole plan, every judicious reader will very near subscribe thereto; and if I am too great an enthusiast in this poetical faith, I shall have a reciprocal pity for the dissenters therefrom, and shall laugh, as *Ariosto* would, when satirical strokes of the sharpest poignancy, or poetical images of the sublimest invention, go under the denomination of extravagancies." He ends his



preface with the description of a dream in which an "awful shade" appeared at his bedside:

A garland round his temples fair did shine,  
Wherein each Muse did different rays entwine;  
Majestick, save when he would deign to smile,  
And glances give, which must the heart beguile.

The ghost's shining eyes and "superior graces" forbade the dreamer to mistake him for Homer or Virgil.

My mind in pain to guess, methought the ghost,  
Nodding benign, said, Know thy Ariost';  
Thy painful pencil, Copy'st, still pursue,  
My portrait shall immortal render you. . . .  
Content you with my Nation's thanks alone;  
I only wish, by Yours I may be known.

As for this translation itself, it was unfortunately a poor thing. I have gone over it again and again, looking for quotable translations of those brilliantly ironical, descriptive, or pathetic passages in which Ariosto, as Huggins said, abounds. In his attempt to reproduce the rimes of his original, our translator played havoc with English grammar. The first stanza of the *Orlando*, so lucid in Ariosto, is quite unintelligible in Huggins, while the second runs:

In the same tract I'll of Orlando say  
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme;  
Whom love to rage and madness did betray,  
A man so sage esteem'd in former time;  
If she, who my small wit still files away,  
And has reduced me almost like him,  
Consent, my feeble brain may be allow'd,  
As much as I have promis'd, to make good.

Of Ariosto's so-called "moral beginnings," we may quote the following, better turned than most, from Canto XXIV:

Who on the glue of love once sets his foot,  
Let him get off before his wings it touch:  
For love a sort of madness is, no doubt;  
The judgment of the wise declares it such;

In all some sign of fury will break out,  
 Though all, Orlando-like, don't rave so much.  
 What can of madness greater mark display  
 Than, others to attain, to throw ourselves away?

Ariosto's irony is, of course, most famously illustrated in the episode where Angelica, beloved by the greatest heroes of Christendom, not to mention those of Paynim, drives Orlando crazy by forcing herself on the shepherd, Medoro. Ariosto apostrophizes in pity not only Orlando but Angelica's whole army of adorers:

O should you e'er alive again return,  
 How hard would it appear, King Agrican!  
 That she once show'd to hold you so in scorn  
 With her repulses, cruel, inhumane!  
 Ferrau! O thousands by my pen forborn!  
 Who have experienc'd thousand proofs in vain  
 For this ingrate, how poignant would it be  
 If her in this man's arms you now should see!

The mere sight of these lovers' names entwined on trees is, in fact, enough to shake Orlando's reason:

"I'm not, I am not, what my look does feign:  
 What was Orland' is dead, in earth is lay'd; . . .  
 I am his spirit, which is from him ta'en . . .  
 That with my ghost thus I alone may prove  
 Sample to him who puts his hope in love."

This episode ends, you remember, when Astolfo finds Orlando's lost wits in the moon, along with great quantities of the thin liquor

Which some in love, some had for honours lost,  
 Others in scouring o'er, for wealth, the sea,  
 Some, for their hopes in mighty patrons cross'd,  
 Some in pursuit of magick foolery. . .

As a sample of Ariosto's descriptive power à la Huggins, we may not take the famous account of Alcina, beloved by Elizabethan poets but ruined by our author. Logistilla's garden, however, into which Ruggiero escapes from the toils of this enchantress, is better done:

Upon the arches high, whose crowns appear'd  
 As if they reach'd to heav'n above the sight,  
 Were spacious and most lovely gardens rear'd;  
 Upon the plain none were of such delight:  
 The flow'ring shrubs their verdant branches spread,  
 And were seen mix'd amid the turrets bright;  
 They winter, summer, endless beauties wore,  
 Adorn'd at once with fruit and blooming flow'r.

Finally, we may cite a pair of examples of Ariosto's pathos. Olimpia deserted by Bireno, and Zerbino dying in the arms of Isabella are perhaps the best-known instances. They are filled with haunting phrases, impossible perhaps to translate, about halcyons lamenting along the shore the "antico infortunio" of sea-drowned Ceyx and his suicidal lover; about Zerbino's mouth fading like a rose, plucked out of season from its "siepe ombrosa." Writes Huggins:

*The shore was left behind; Olympia too,  
 Forlorn, fast sleeping; nor did she awake  
 Until Aurora the hoar-frosted dew  
 From off her golden wheels on earth 'gan shake,  
 Till on the banks Alcyone anew  
 For her mishap 'gan lamentation make:  
 'Twixt sleep and wake her hand did she extend  
 Her Biren to embrace, but to no end.*

It is as follows that he renders Isabella's comfort to the knight whose only unhappiness, dying on her bosom, was to leave her without defense in a savage world:

*"Of that, let no fear touch you, dearest heart,  
 For I to heav'n or hell will follow thee:  
 'Tis fit that both our souls together start,  
 Together go, join'd in eternity.  
 When from those eyes I see the light depart,  
 Either internal grief will murder me,  
 Or, if that cannot, to you I protest,  
 With this your sword, to-day I'll pass my breast."*

Baretti's hopes of profit from Huggins' translation never materialized. The book fell stillborn from the press. There were

two chief reasons: the times were not ripe for such a large dose of romance, and the pill was by no means expertly gilded. The indifferent specimens I have quoted are the very cream of Huggins' skill as a translator. It is doubtful if even a genius in translation could have made Ariosto thrive in what may be called, so far as most Italian poetry was concerned, the critical miasma of the midcentury. Only the year before Huggins published his *Orlando*, Thomas Warton, in his *Observations on the Faerie Queene of Spenser* (1754), had attacked Ariosto as viciously as had ever Rapin or Voltaire for "rejecting truth for magic, and preferring the ridiculous and incoherent excursions of Bojardo to the propriety and uniformity of the Grecian and Roman models." The *Orlando* he had torn to bits as a tissue of Gothic tomfooleries—a "maze of indigestion, and incoherence"—concluding with the Abbé Dubos that "Homer is a geometrician in comparison of Ariosto." Similar "strictures" now being served up to him by the critics of the day, Huggins thought he could best serve the cause of Ariosto by attacking Warton himself. *The Observer Observ'd* (1756) failed, however, of its purpose. Huggins, as we have said, was no writer, and his sexagenarian indignation against the verbally adept young Warton continually slipped from argument into invective. When so many things might have been said in Ariosto's defense, we find him calling the *Observations* a "voluminous *far-rago* of pedantry and impertinence." Warton had made fun of the fact that the *Orlando* had once been declared superior to the *Gerusalemme* "by a formal decree of the Academicians della Crusca, who held a solemn court of inquiry concerning the merit of both poems." "Good heav'ns!" exclaimed Huggins, "*a formal decree*—what insolence! *a solemn Court*—what ignorance! But soft; a person of any tolerable decency might have implicitly imagin'd a Nation, simply considered, might have been the most adequate judges of two productions of their mother tongue. . ." It was no wonder Dr. Johnson observed of this literary quarrel that "Huggins has ball without powder, and Warton powder without ball."

It seems that, in spite of the unpopularity of the English *Orlando*, Croker, who had signed the dedication, was willing to take

the credit for the translation. Huggins therefore caused the work, very few copies of which had been sold, to be reissued in 1757 with his own name on the title-page and the addition of a prolegomenon, notes, and an index. In 1759 he published his own version of the cantos translated by Croker.<sup>11</sup> The "Prolegomenon" to the reissue of 1757 recapitulates many of Rolli's old *Remarks on M. Voltaire's Essay on Epick Poetry*, asking Englishmen to remember that the Italians designate Ariosto, for his skill in all branches of the literary art, not only their Homer, but their Horace, their Terence, and their Tibullus. The "Notes" are mostly of the exclamatory kind, as, "Most elegant comparison! most delicate stanza!" or, "What a sweetly finished landscape!" though they also make some attempt to elucidate Ariosto's references to contemporary Italian history. What interests us most in the additions of 1757 is an unnumbered page of poetry called "The Translator's Lamentation," filled with self-pity for a life's work miscarried, and a pathetic prophecy of the romantic triumph to come.

Like that of Ariosto is my fate;  
 He wrote as he thought best; so I translate:  
 With genius, fire, invention, for his tools,  
 He deem'd himself uncircumscrib'd by rules. . .  
 Our nibbling critics will no fame allow him.  
 Pert says, Why, Sir! 'tis no heroic poem!  
 And the translator! each true wit must hate him!  
 Pox of his pains! what! render thus! verbatim!  
 Italians give their poet names to gull us  
 Of Homer, Horace, Terence, and Tibullus.  
 Well judg'd, choice spirits, leave to Italy  
 Their slighted author, and leave wretched me. . .  
*Eliza's days*, when we sweet Tuscan read,  
 And scorn'd the French to imitate or dread,  
 Again shall come; then readers, with amaze,  
 Upon my toilful enterprise shall gaze,  
 Him bard sublime and me his humble copy'st praise.

Before leaving this momentary flare-up of interest in Ariosto, we may mention a translation of *Le satire*, made by Temple Henry

<sup>11</sup> XXI, XXII, XXV, XXVI, XXVII, XXXIII, XL, and XLVI.

Croker,<sup>12</sup> Huggins' erstwhile collaborator, and the Reverend Mr. "H-rt-n," whose identity I have not been able to discover. These satires, translated in Elizabethan times by Robert Tofte, are valuable for their intimate picture of the waking life and manners of the poet of whose dreams we know so much. In a life of Ariosto, prefixed to the *Satires*, Croker affirmed, following tradition, that Leo X had been "so extravagantly fond of his works as to publish a bull in favour of his grand Poem, and denounce excommunication against those who should disapprove of it, or rob him of his profits. . ." Ariosto had, however, recorded the story of Leo's largess in a typically ironical strain:

When first I knelt before his sacred feet,  
 He bow'd him lowly from the papal seat;  
 He grasp'd my hand, with friendly warmth caress'd,  
 And on each cheek an holy kiss impress'd;  
 Nay more, to prove his love beyond dispute,  
 Patient he heard, and granted—half my suit. . .  
 My audience ended, licens'd by the Pope,  
 I part, with projects big and airy hope,  
 Thro' rain and plashy roads content to get  
 Some miles to supper, dirty, tir'd, and wet.

Ariosto also experienced neglect and disappointment at the hands of his Este patrons—a fate which later incensed romantic lovers of the *Orlando*. These were to be pleased with the satires, however, for their picture of the poet wishing, when governor of the Garfagnana,

The school-boy's wish, an idle week at home,  
 To lounge betwixt the statues and the dome. . .

Only such holidays from business can keep a poet, he said, from fretting himself as lean

As purgatory-souls, that vainly stretch  
 Their famished jaws to fruit just out of reach.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Croker wrote the "Advertisement" and "The Life of Ludovico Ariosto, a Nobleman of Ferrara," and translated *Satires I and VII*.

<sup>13</sup> These lines, "H-rt-n" noted, allude "to the twenty-second and twenty-third cantos of Dante's purgatory, where *quondam* gluttons are described in that uncomfortable position"—a Dante reference not in Tynbee.

These satires may also be thought of as fostering in English hearts affection for the land which Ariosto himself had loved so well that he was content to see no other:

Two seas that wash th' Italian coast I've seen,  
And travers'd o'er the land that lies between;  
Of Appennines and Alps can talk beside,  
That these enclose the country, those divide.  
Now idleness or prudence deems it best,  
In maps and charts secure, to view the rest. . .

The Italian of some of these lines was prefixed, you remember, to the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*.

THE EARL OF CORK AND ORRERY, AND OTHERS: A LITTLE  
LIGHT ON ITALIAN HISTORY: 1755-1762

In the same year that Huggins summoned Baretti to help him resurrect for English readers the enchanted world of Ariosto, John Boyle, fifth Earl of Cork and Orrery, began to dispatch from Florence a series of letters destined to awaken British interest in another long-neglected source of potential poetic inspiration—the old domestic crimes of Italy's petty princes. Boyle, born in 1707, was the great-grandson of Roger, first Earl of Orrery, the Restoration author of several flamboyant historical tragedies. In life he was the friend of Pope, Dr. Johnson, and Swift, the last of whom once wrote to the first, "Pray, let my lord *Orrery* see you often: next to yourself, I love no man so well." Among the earl's published works were a new edition of his great-grandfather's plays, a translation of the letters of the younger Pliny, and *Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift*. In 1754-55 Cork,<sup>14</sup> with his countess and his daughter, Lady Lucy, made a trip to Italy, apparently for the sake of dodging the gout. In Florence he presented to the Accademia della Crusca a copy of Dr. John-

<sup>14</sup> Since we deal with the work of the Earl of Orrery only after he succeeded to the Earldom of Cork (1753), we find it advisable to use his new and more important title. In so doing we follow the demands of etiquette and the usage of the earl's friends, of the editor of his correspondence, and of his lordship himself, who signed all of his letters from Italy with the word "Corke."

son's *Dictionary* (published in 1755), and sought to enjoy himself after the fashion of the travelling gentleman of those days. However, the gout overtaking him even in Italy, he was forced to find a sedentary occupation. The task he appointed himself was to epitomize the history of Tuscany as exhibited in her chief historians, Machiavelli, Varchi, Segni, and Ammirato. The fact that "A speculative mind is always in search of novelty" seems to have led him into a field studiously avoided by most of his compatriots.

Lord Cork's *Epitome of the Revolutions of Tuscany, in a Series of Twelve Letters, Which Bring It Down from the Year 1215 to the Birth of Alexander, Afterwards Duke of Florence, in 1510* has never been published.<sup>15</sup> His letters on Medicean history subsequent to that period were included, however, in John Duncombe's edition of his lordship's *Letters from Italy*, published in 1773. Now these few letters, by again laying before Englishmen some of the domestic horrors which had inspired *The White Devil*, *Women Beware Women*, and *The Traylor*, seem, when published, to have done more than any other single book to reawaken them to the poetical possibilities of old Italian crime. An examination of tomes and traditions long closed to English readers convinced Cork that "few or none of the whole race [of Medici] were endued with the softer passions of the human soul." In support of this belief he adduced the murder of Alessandro, the first duke, by his ambitious cousin, Lorenzino, but his real proof lay in three stories, the facts of which had never yet, he thought, been circulated in England. These were the crimes of Cosimo, the first grand duke, and of his sons, Garzia and Ferdinando.

Before the gout laid him up, Cork had hastened to see the Palazzo Vecchio, which he describes as "*Gothicly* antique; lofty, gloomy, and venerable." Strangest of all the old crimes enacted there was, he thought, the unspeakable incest of Cosimo with his eldest daughter, Isabella. This scandal he extracted from Vasari, and used as a basis for reinterpreting the tragic career of Isabella, already known to lovers of Jacobean tragedy as the wronged wife in Webster's *White Devil*. According to Cork, her husband, Paolo

<sup>15</sup> Mentioned by Cork's editor, Duncombe, in his preface to the *Letters*.



Giordano Orsini, Duke of Bracciano, murdered her, not for the sake of Vittoria Accorambona, but because of her manifold infidelities and the rumor of her sin with Cosimo. Retiring to a countryseat on the pretext of hunting, Bracciano sent for the beautiful but profligate girl in "so mysterious and doubtful" a message that "the female confidants of the dutchess advised her not to obey the summons." Less than half an hour after her arrival she was strangled.

The horrid passions of the Medici seemed to Cork to be even better revealed in the story of "Garcias" and Giovanni, sons of the wicked Cosimo. Why and how the fifteen-year-old Garzia came to murder his elder brother, Cardinal Giovanni, Cork does not tell. He merely affirms that the catastrophe happened while both were hunting. Garzia, though his mother's favorite, had always, he says, "discovered an untoward and barbarous disposition." After the murder Cosimo, "who had observed in his second son as great an inclination to wickedness as in his eldest to piety," fell into an "outrageous" fit of anger. He banished Garzia forever from his presence, but was finally prevailed upon by the grand duchess, Eleanora, to allow the repentant boy to entreat his pardon. It was agreed that Garzia should, as it were by chance, throw himself at his apparently appeased father's feet as the duke returned from mass on Easter morning (1562). But the duke, drawing from his bosom a dagger "which he had concealed on purpose," stabbed the boy to the heart. Only think, observes Cork, only "reflect on every circumstance, the time, the manner, and the subject—you will scarce remember so strong an instance of nature starting from her course, and divesting herself of every spark of humanity." A picture of Garzia's mother trying to intercept the fatal blow was published on the title-page of Cork's *Letters*. As our author concluded, misquoting Clarendon's description of Cromwell, this Cosimo was "'A great wicked man.'"

The last crime of the Medici which Cork uncovered was connected with Bianca Capello. How Francesco, the second grand duke, had seduced the beautiful runaway Venetian; made her his duchess; and died in her dying arms when her plot to poison his brother, the righteous Cardinal Ferdinando, miscarried, had fur-

nished Middleton with the plot of one of the great Jacobean tragedies, *Women Beware Women*. On recalling this tale to English notice, Cork made several alterations in the story Middleton had known. He affirmed that the grand duke had first seen Bianca when on a visit to Venice, at which time he had invited her and her countinghouse husband, called Buonsignori, to come to Florence. Though he had, on their coming, immediately attempted to ruin her virtue, neither blandishments nor violence could shake the chaste Bianca. "His attempts and stratagems were many and various, but every stratagem and every attempt was ineffectual: her virtue was impregnable." In the meantime her husband, grown giddy with gold, insulted certain noblemen, to whom Francesco readily gave permission to murder him. After his death on Santa Trinità Bridge Bianca, "in the melancholy pomp of mourning," threw herself at the duke's feet to call down punishment on the murderers. " 'The best justice I can grant you,' said the great-duke, 'is to marry you myself.' " Now in this match the haughty Cardinal Ferdinando, Francesco's brother, saw the ancient honor of the Medici dragged in the dirt. His rude treatment of the new duchess soon lit in her heart a hatred equal to his own. "They wished each other dead, and they lived in a time to accomplish their wishes. The art of poisoning was then a science, in which the greatest and the meanest of the *Italians* were perfectly well versed." At this point, says Cork, Bianca is generally accused of having poisoned a tart for her ecclesiastical brother's breakfast. When Francesco accidentally got hold of it, she immediately partook likewise, and they died "like true lovers, clasped in each other's arms." But, adds Cork, this account, "though the only one extant, is undoubtedly false. *Bianca* was innocent. The death of her and of her husband was contrived and perpetrated by the cardinal. He poisoned the tart, and they ate it." Thus Cork restored the half-forgotten name of Bianca Capello not only to English attention but to grace as well. At the end of the *Letters from Italy* Duncombe inserted genealogical tables of the house of Medici, apparently prepared by Cork, which were designed to show how great a number of this family had come to catastrophic ends.

For poetic or dramatic reverberations of these Medici tragedies

we cannot look in the years now under consideration. As I said before, these letters were never published till 1773. Not long after Cork wrote, however, we find in Lord Lyttelton's *Dialogues of the Dead* (1760) and William Weston's (?) *New Dialogues of the Dead* (1762) what were probably the first imaginative uses to which figures from Italian history had been put in England in sixty years. Thomson's *Tancred and Sigismunda*, dealing as it does with the *Norman* history of Sicily, may be discounted here for the sake of our generalization. These dialogues set Cosimo, *Paier Patriæ*, talking with Pericles; Julius II, with Louis XII of France; and Sixtus V, with the Flemish pope, Adrian VI. The Italians are not presented, however, in what we may call a romantic light. Lyttelton's Cosimo does not lecture Pericles on how he defended the liberties of Florence from the noble faction under Rinaldo degli Albizzi. He is, in fact, the pattern of a rather cynical English prime minister, and boasts to the Greek:

We were in reality Sovereigns, while we lived with the Simplicity of private Men: and Athens and Florence seemed to be free, though they obeyed our Dictates. This is more than was done by Philip of Macedon, or Sylla, or Cæsar. It is the Perfection of Policy to tame the fierce Spirit of popular Liberty, not by Blows, or by Chains, but by soothing it into a willing Obedience, and making it lick the Hand that restrains it.

Nor does Weston see Julius II and Sixtus V as gigantic supermen. In the character of the prelate who, cased in mail under his pontifical robes, strove to free Italy of its French and German invaders, Weston seems to have found nothing but, as Louis XII put it, "debauchery, rage, ambition, faction, and perfidy." From what Gibbon later called the "wild and original character" of Sixtus V, who "burst from the gloom of a Franciscan cloister,"<sup>26</sup> Weston wrung nothing but the sophistical declaration, immediately combated by Adrian, that "grandeur and pre-eminence, uncontrolled dominion, and worldly possessions are, for the most part, the main ingredients in human felicity."

Indignant characterizations like these were certainly not pre-lusive of an attitude toward the figures of Italian history which

<sup>26</sup> *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter LXX.

was to find good even in an Alexander VI. These dialogues are a valuable indication, however, that the stock of Italian history was rising among English writers. They shadow forth the imaginary conversations between dead Italians which Landor was so fond of inventing. Here I notice them simply for what they are—milestones on the road we are travelling.

JOSEPH WARTON, HUGGINS, CHARLES BURNET, AND OTHERS  
 ENGLISH CRITICS COME TO THE DEFENSE OF THE ITALIAN  
 EPICS: DANTE TRANSLATED: 1756-1761

Not for long were Baretti and Huggins voices crying vainly in the picturesque wilderness of Headly Park. English defenders of the Italian epic poets now began to spring up, and a band of hardy translators. Revised notions of the ends and aims of poetry began to undermine French classical criticism and bring the Italian poets to the fore. In a few years Dante was for the first time turned into English.

Baretti, we remember, in recommending the Italian poets to English readers, continually dwelt on their brilliant imagery, energetic characterization, and moving pathos as if these were, indeed, in spite of the "rules," the chief stuff of poetry. Nor was it long before he found at least one Englishman to agree with him. In his *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope* (Vol. I, 1756), Joseph Warton, elder brother of the pert young enemy of Ariosto and then second master of Winchester School, came out with such a strong plea for specific imagery, lifelike dialogue, and graphically depicted passion in poetry that he is always remembered as one of the fathers of romantic criticism. Warton was of the opinion that the philosophic ideas and critical generalizations with which Pope had filled his verses detracted from their value as poetry. Instead of moral abstractions he wished that Pope had filled his poems with minutely described scenes, dialogues drawn from nature, and pathetic pictures of the passions. His lack of these virtues reduced him to the second class of English poets, distinctly below "our only three sublime and pathetic poets: SPENSER, SHAKESPEARE, MILTON." These wonderful artists, Warton noted again and again, had imitated and formed themselves on

the major Italian poets, who always had a flair, it seems, for what makes poetry great. Time after time Warton fell back on the practice of the Italians when he wished to illustrate his theories of fine poetry. His favorites seem to have been Dante, Tasso, and Ariosto, in the order named—" (for that wonderful original, Dante, is the first)." Like Baretti, with whose ideals of poetry and whose judgments of the Italian poets he coincided most remarkably, Warton had little use for the whining pastoral playwrights or the "metaphysical" Petrarch, asserting that, compared with this latter, "Metastasio is a much better lyric poet." Ariosto he admired chiefly for his wit and satire; Tasso, for showing "how fine an epic poem the Italian language, notwithstanding the vulgar imputation of effeminacy, was capable of supporting." Both these poets he commended for their brilliant word pictures. In portraits of the passions, however, he preferred Dante, apparently because he always founded his fictions on fact, a procedure which kept his descriptions as minute, true, and lively as Warton could wish. As an example of all that pathetic poetry ought to be, he gave a prose version of the Ugolino episode from the *Inferno*—already turned into verse by Richardson and Gray, and into prose by Baretti—adding: "Perhaps the *Inferno* of Dante is the next composition to the *Iliad*, in point of originality and sublimity. And with regard to the Pathetic, let this tale stand a testimony to his abilities: for my own part, I truly believe it was never carried to a greater height." More than once Warton suggested that English poets, if they were ever again to soar to the heights attained by Spenser and Milton, had better go back to their teachers, the immortal though neglected Italians.

Writing "Of the Standard of Taste"<sup>17</sup> in 1757, David Hume, the historian, though a stickler for the "rules of composition," allowed that it is possible for Italian poets like Ariosto to please in spite of their transgressions. Their ready invention, clear-cut descriptions, and "natural pictures of the passions" furnish a fund of beauty "conformable to just criticism" which overshadows their offenses. In 1758 Vincenzo Martinelli, an Italian teacher like Baretti, further defended his epic countrymen, especially Ariosto

<sup>17</sup> In *Four Dissertations*.

and Dante, against Voltaire in *Lettere familiari e critiche*, published in London. Of Ariosto he reëchoed Baretti's praises to the effect that "this most ingenious florist knew to his immortal glory just how to cull the finest flowers of our language, and dispose them with such a deft and pleasing economy as to render him the favorite Muse of the most discriminating tastes."<sup>18</sup> To George Walpole, third Earl of Orford and nephew of Horace, whose interest in Dante appears to have been stimulated by Warton's essay on Pope, Martinelli wrote two letters on the *Divina commedia*. In these he gave details of Dante's life, and tried to show the relation of the poem to the political and religious conditions of the time in which it was written. He finishes:

I will conclude, then, by saying that Dante gave the Italian language its first motions toward the sublime and beautiful, and is still regarded as its principal prop and ornament. . . His similes for the most part are very beautiful and the result solely of his own genius; his descriptions are lively in the highest degree and supremely original; and his sublimity results from the height and at the same time the profound truth of thoughts expressed by the most common words—the kind of sublimity which Longinus commends above every other. . . . Your Excellency . . . will find that what superficial critics call his harshness is really a form of elegance and majesty especially peculiar to this poet. . .<sup>19</sup>

As an example of how tender Dante can be, Martinelli quoted the episode of Francesca da Rimini, thus initiating that taste for this story which reached its height in the days when Gilbert felt called upon to satirize a certain type of "Francesca da Rimini, miminy, piminy, / *Je-ne-sais-quoi* young man."

The time was now ripe, if not for Englishmen as a whole to approve and copy Dante, at least for a few choice spirits to set about converting his great poem into English. It was fitting, perhaps, that the lovable if foolhardy Huggins was the "first in the isle" to undertake a complete version of the *Divina commedia*. This he seems to have begun and ended between 1758 and 1760. His version, which was never published, followed his *Orlando* in rendering the original line for line, though the difficulty of

<sup>18</sup> My translation.

<sup>19</sup> My translation.

*terza rima* forced him to fall back on the conventional eighteenth-century couplet for a rime scheme. In spite of the failure of his Ariosto to achieve success, Huggins was fully determined to publish his version of the still less popular Dante. To serve as a frontispiece to this work he made Hogarth, whom he had befriended and patronized, do his portrait with a bust of Ariosto in the background on one side, and on the other a tablet bearing the names of the three divisions of the *Divina commedia*. The only example of this translation which seems to have survived is a version of Dante's rendering of the Lord's Prayer.<sup>20</sup> This bit, printed anonymously in the *British Magazine* (1760), is assigned to Huggins on the authority of the *Dictionary of National Biography*. There is no mistaking, I think, his loyal, if clumsy, hand, or his motto: "*Sicut meus mos*, as literally as possible." The last few lines of this translation run:

Our daily manna give to us this day,  
 Without it, thro' this wild and thorny way,  
 Who strives to travel, will more backward stray. }  
 And like as are those wrongs which we receive,  
 In others pardon'd, so thy pardon give,  
 Benignant; nor survey our merit small,  
 And feeble virtue, so propense to fall;  
 Suffer not our old enemy to tempt,  
 But from his punctures [!] keep us still exempt.  
Amen

It was probably only Huggins' death in 1761 which kept this translation, uncouth as it must have been, from seeing the light.

A prose version of the *Inferno*, made about this same time by Fanny Burney's father, Charles, also appears to have perished. We know about it from Fanny's *Memoirs of Dr. Burney* (1832). He undertook it, it seems, to distract himself from the grief of losing his first wife in 1761. In this particular he may be said to have founded a tradition among Dante translators: that, to wit, of tracking in trouble and disappointment the Italian pilgrim of eternity from his "*selva oscura*" to "*quella vista nuova*." Why Dr. Burney stopped this side of paradise I do not know.

<sup>20</sup> *Purgatorio* XI, 1-21.

It is too bad that both the first important translations of Dante have perished. Samples of Dante renderings must be accordingly deferred to a later date.

CHRISTOPHER HERVEY AND OTHERS: GLIMMERINGS OF  
INTEREST IN THE ITALIAN LYRIC POETS: 1760; 1761

It is partly significant of Baretti's influence, I think, that while the epics, which he praised, almost immediately began to flourish, Italian lyric poetry, which he usually pooh-poohed, remained largely undefended, untranslated, and unknown. In his anxiety to recommend his native literature to midcentury Englishmen, Baretti was almost too careful to avoid praising anything that could possibly be called soft. Thus, in spite of the fact that Italian sonnets and *canzoni* are filled with a sincere love of God, nature, and fatherland as well as a somewhat honeyed and transcendental regard for woman, the great apologist shied away from the whole lyric field. We have already seen the contempt with which, in order to recommend Dante, he was willing to dismiss Petrarch, the acknowledged chief and father of Italian lyric poetry in its religious and patriotic as well as amorous strains. An idea of Englishmen's low opinion of the Italian lyric about the middle of the eighteenth century may be gathered from the fact that Joseph Warton, usually so sympathetic toward Italian literature, felt forced to observe in 1756 that "the stanza of Petrarch . . . displeases the ear by its uniformity, and by the number of identical cadences. And indeed, to speak the truth, there appears to be little valuable in Petrarch except the purity of his diction. His sentiments, even of love, are metaphysical and far fetched; neither is there much variety in his subjects, or fancy in his method of treating them."

In spite of Baretti and Warton, however, circumstances which I shall discuss in another place were combining in the 1760's to bring Petrarch and his followers, so popular in Elizabethan England, back into British favor. At this point it is sufficient to observe that the minor poetry of the time can be made, if tightly squeezed, to yield two or three rather fond references to the love-lorn hermit of Vaucluse, as where, in *Odes on Several Subjects* (1761), James Scott asks Sleep to



Bring too thy soft, enchanting Dreams,  
Such as enamour'd Petrarch knew  
When, stretch'd by Sorgia's gentle streams,  
Fair Laura's form his Fancy drew:  
Oh see, he woos the Soul-dissolving Maid,  
And grasps with eager Arms the visionary Shade.

Amongst these mild references I can find, however, no deep appreciation of Petrarch's erotic temper, and no mention at all of his patriotic fervor. Indeed, it will not be until the late 1770's that we shall come across a sympathetic understanding of the Italian poet who was destined to have more direct influence than any other on English literature before 1815.

Less deferred tribute was rendered, oddly enough, to certain of Petrarch's less towering compatriots. In 1755 Huggins had published, it seems, translations from the love lyrics of Zappi, and now Christopher Hervey, who travelled in Italy in 1760-61,<sup>21</sup> began to explore the field of Italian patriotic verse. Any interest whatever in the Italian lyric being rare in Hervey's day, his peculiar brand seems to have been unique. About this traveller's life, even the dates of his birth and death, I have been able to discover nothing. Internal evidence would seem to indicate that he was a successful practitioner of medicine with a strong desire for travel, a love of learning, and an indignation against tyrants.

It seems to have been the vigor of this last trait which led Hervey to nose out, apparently for the first time, some of Italy's most famous patriotic poems. Such sympathy with the enslaved Italians, not to mention such disgust with their oppressors, as led Hervey to make his discoveries I can find in none of his predecessors with the possible exception of Baretti, who, in *The Italian Library*, laments the corruption which is bound to overtake the Tuscan tongue now that "the best part" of Italy "is in the hand of strangers, that think more of plunder than of literature, and do not care to preserve a language they scarcely understand." Though Hervey did not find the Italians entirely free from the apathy conventionally laid at their door, he was willing to believe them

<sup>21</sup> His *Letters from Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Germany* was not published, however, till 1785.

worthy of pity and hope. In this view he was encouraged by the surprising attachment to liberty often displayed in the poems of a people usually supposed to be hopelessly sunk in superstitious reverence for tyrants. In all Tuscany, in all Italy, he found—and that only with the help of Betti's poem beginning, "Qui dove al Serchio minaccioso in riva"—none but the people of Lucca reasonably free. Betti's verses he translated into English prose with a note to the effect that "the rest of the Tuscans . . . have not only lost their liberty, but are gone under the dominion of foreigners, under the government of

—northern sons, an iron race,

to use the words of the old song called Arno's Vale. . ." He lamented that "the present emperor does not seem to have much affection for his Italian subjects, and severe drafts are made upon their men to march against the King of Prussia, a war they have nothing to do with. . . Alas, poor Tuscany. . ."

In comment upon this mournful situation Hervey quoted what he called "a beautiful epigram, written by an Italian some years ago upon the miserable state of Italy. . ." This was Filicaia's famous sonnet beginning, "Italia, Italia, o tu," which Hervey accompanied with a prose translation. This sonnet, apparently discovered by Hervey, became dearer, perhaps, than any other bit of Italian poetry to the hearts of the romantic poets to come. Here we may give his baroque translation, sire of a long and famous list of similar attempts:

Oh! Italy, oh! Italy, thou to whom nature has granted the unhappy gift of beauty, from whence thou derivest the melancholy fruit of those endless woes which to thy sorrow thou bearest engraven upon thy brow. Oh! that heaven had crowned thee with less beauty, or at least had bestowed greater strength upon thee, that those who pine for thy irradiating charms, yet challenge thee to deadly combat, might love thee less, or at least redoubt thee more. Then should I not behold torrents of soldiers pouring from the Alps, nor Gallic herds drinking the waters of the Po stained with thy blood. Then should I not behold thee, alas! girted with others' swords, and fighting with the arm of strangers, to be always a slave, whether thou art the conqueror or the conquered.

At this point Hervey, with a still more uncanny prescience of the times to come, also inserted "some verses said to be made extempore by Michael Angelo upon the same subject. . ." A friend of the artist had once written upon his famous statue, "Night":

Behold how sweetly the Goddess Night reposes! An *Angel* engraved her from this stone. See, she sleeps, she breathes. If thou believest it not, awake her and she will speak to thee.

But Michelangelo had made the statue reply:

Alas! awake me not while shame and misfortune overwhelm my country. Sleep is grateful to me and more the being of stone. Alas! awake me not. Speak softly.

These two discoveries alone would be enough, I think, to entitle Hervey to a place in our story. It is worth noting that a French traveller, Jean Pierre Grosley, quoted not only Filicaia's "Italia, Italia, o tu" but also his "Dov'è, Italia, il tuo braccio?" in his *Nouveaux mémoires, ou observations sur l'Italie et sur les italiens* ("Londres," 1764). This work, but not the quoted matter, was translated into English by Thomas Nugent (1769).

Other poets quoted and praised by Hervey include Adami and Rolli. Though his incursions into the field of the Italian lyric were neither numerous nor far-flung, they make a beginning and entitle Hervey to the applause and gratitude due to the pioneer.

PHILIP DOYNE, RICHARD HURD, JOHN HOOLE, AND OTHERS  
TASSO DRAMATIZED AND TRANSLATED: 1761-1763

It is an odd fact that of the three chief epic poets of Italy, Tasso, whose stock certainly stood highest in England at the beginning of our study in 1755, was the last to be completely translated. But his day came. Long before Baretta and Warton began to defend Italian poetry, he had been moderately well ensconced in English affections. Now the accumulated interest in him exploded twice in rapid succession.

Before coming to the translations of Tasso, however, let us look back two or three years to a play called *Olindo and Sophronia*, published in 1758. Its author, Abraham Portal, was educated, he

says, "not in the learned and peaceful Retreats of *the Muses*, but in the rude and noisy Shop of *Vulcan*." By the unsophisticated simplicity of his heart he was drawn, he implies, to write a play on an innocent theme from the second canto of the *Gerusalemme*. He never submitted it to the theatre managers, of course, being certain they would damn it, "as a Strain of Piety runs through many of the Scenes. . ." For pious pathos Frenchified critics would condemn a naïf Englishman, he was sure, just as they had so often condemned his great original, the naïf Tasso.

Portal made very few changes in Tasso's story of the lovers who, though both innocent of the crime, seek to save the Christians of Jerusalem from a pogrom by claiming to have stolen a mysteriously vanished statue of the Virgin. This statue Ismeno, the paynim wizard, had formerly enchanted and tried to confine in a mosque in the hope of discouraging the crusaders' attack upon the city. As in Tasso, Aladine, the king, orders both Olindo and Sofronia to be burned at the stake, where, bound amid the rising flames, they declaim paraphrases of "Altre fiamme, altri nodi Amor promise. . ." In the nick of time they are rescued, too, by that *dea ex machina*, Clorinda, here called Marfisa. The chief change which Portal made was to give King Aladine a kind old counsellor, Orcano, who turns out to be Olindo's father, formerly captured by Mohammedans. This Nestor has pretended to adopt his captors' faith only in order to keep his life and persuade the king to treat his Christian subjects with mercy. Portal also made King Aladine furiously lustful for Sophronia's body—a villainy expressly disclaimed by Tasso. Doubtless this play afforded, as its humble author hoped, "a rational and agreeable Entertainment in the Closet, where vicious Fashion does not tyrannize, and where Men need not blush to appear pleased with *natural Sentiment*, and touched with *just Distress*. . ."

Tasso's lessons in religion and morality were even more especially insisted upon by his first translator since Fairfax, who now appeared on the scene in the person of the warm-hearted Irishman, Philip Doyne, about whom little seems to be known. His *Delivery of Jerusalem* appeared in Dublin in 1761. It is written in blank verse which is fairly competent and sometimes

reaches a real fusion of sentiment with sound. Doyne prefaced his translation with Henry Layng's "Life of Tasso," reprinted from *Several Pieces in Prose and Verse* (1748), and "An Essay on The Delivery of Jerusalem," in which he incorporated with his own most of the complimentary things that Voltaire had written of the Italian in his English tract on epic poetry. In this "Essay" Doyne exalted Tasso to truly romantic heights. Huggins himself had not dared so much for Ariosto. As an epic poet, Tasso has, he maintained, excelled both Homer and Virgil, and often Milton himself. In the first place, his subject is nobler than those of the pagan poets, furnishing him with "an endless stock of sublime ideas, and excellent sentiments, productive of every kind of virtue." Next, Tasso has an "enchanting way of interesting us for his heroes," which makes us love them better than the vengeful Achilles or the unscrupulously "pious" Æneas. Thirdly, the *Gerusalemme* exhibits better building toward a climax than the *Æneid* or *Paradise Lost*. It must be added, however, that Doyne failed to commend Tasso's fondness for witchcraft.

As for Layng's "Life of Tasso," reprinted by Doyne, it seems that as early as 1748 this author had discovered that "There is something so entertaining, so noble, so piteous, so marvellous, in the Fortune of *Torquato Tasso* that I know not any Man's Story more interesting or more instructive." It was Layng, apparently, who first introduced into English literature an extended account of those woes which, true or false, later caused Tasso to pass as the very type of the impractical poet in a hard-hearted world. I refer, of course, to his daring and hopeless love for the beautiful Este princess, Eleonora, and his cruel confinement by the duke, her brother—a pair of misfortunes which combined, so the story goes, to overset his reason. Layng, assuming that Eleonora could not have helped loving our poet, left "her Complaints, Soliloquies, and Menaces to be described in a pathetic Poem by that Poet who shall in the manner of *Ovid*, or his Equal, *Antonio Bruni*, write an *Epistola Eroicha* [sic] from *Leonora* to *Tasso*."<sup>22</sup> It was to be some time, however, before Layng's recommendation was acted on, as we shall see.

<sup>22</sup> Quotations taken from the original edition of the work.

Meanwhile, let us reproduce a few samples of Doyne's blank-verse Tasso, which begins:

I sing the pious arms and chief renown'd  
 Who freed Messia's glorious sepulchre;  
 Much did his prudence, much his valour toil,  
 Much did he suffer in that great acqurest,  
 And hell in vain oppos'd him; and in vain  
 The host of Asia and of Lybia arm'd:  
 Heaven gave him favour; and his erring friends  
 Beneath his holy standards he reduc'd.

As a sample of Tasso's description, that acclaimed virtue of all the Italian epic writers, we may take the love scene of Rinaldo and Armida in the latter's enchanted garden, with its

ponds as chrystal clear,  
 And moving silver tumbling from the spring;  
 Fair trees, high plants, strange herbs, and flow'rets new,  
 And sunny mounts, and cool umbrageous dales,  
 Groves, arbours, mossy caves. . .

As Rinaldo's head lay in the witch's lap,

She twisted in a golden tress his<sup>28</sup> hair,  
 Confin'd with silken bands its wanton curls,  
 And, like a garland, dress'd them up with flow'rs;  
 Wherein, like rich enamel laid on gold,  
 The twisted flow'rs did smile; and then adorn'd  
 The native lily of her heaving breast  
 With roses not her own; not half so fair  
 The haughty peacock in his pomp appears,  
 And the ey'd feathers of his azure train  
 Spreads glorious to the sun; nor half so bright  
 The golden Iris bends, thro' clouds of rain,  
 Her twenty-colour'd bow, as did the zone  
 That bound her graceful waist, and which, unloos'd,  
 Naked the lovely wanton was. . .

This catches, it seems to me, some of the tropical luxury of the original. Besides Armida's garden, a certain enchanted forest figures largely in the plot of the *Gerusalemme*. Within each tree which

<sup>28</sup> her?

the crusaders planned to fell for engines of war Ismeno had confined a sprite. The following is Doyme's version of the passage which had caused Collins, as early as 1749, to shudder with bated breath. Tancredi heard the whistling wind

Ceaseless, amidst the brakes and branches, blow,  
And frame a melancholy harmony,  
Like human sighs and woe, that in his heart  
Breath'd sadness, and compassion and distress.

He drew his sword at length, with all his force  
Striking the tree, when, horrible to tell!  
Out of the rift, forth gush'd a stream of blood. . .

Like Ariosto, Tasso was skilled in pathos as well as in pictures and marvellous adventures. Perhaps the best known thing of this kind is the passage, dramatized by Portal, in which Olindo, bound back to back with Sofronia at the burning stake, laments their fate:

"Are these, alas, the bands I fondly hop'd  
Should join our lives? And this the fatal fire  
That I, alas, too credulous! believ'd  
With mutual ardour should our breasts enflame? . . .  
Oh my Sophronia! In this dreadful hour  
To die with thee is happiness supreme;  
To share your funeral pyle, since not your bed. . .  
And all my pains were fortunate and sweet,  
If yet I could obtain that, breast to breast,  
I might breathe out my spirit on your lips. . ."

In place of Ariosto's "ironical," Tasso was said to be rich in "philosophical," sentiments, with an instance of which—the stanza beginning, "Giace l'alta Cartago"—we may close our samples from Doyme:

A ruin now, imperial Carthage lies,  
That scarce the remnants of her palaces  
Surpass the weeds in height; so cities fall,  
So perish kingdoms, and their pride and pomp  
Are bury'd in the sands, and grass conceals  
Their ruins. Wherefore then shou'd man repine  
That he is mortal, or be proud of life  
Whose breath is fleeting air?

At least one of the reasons which led Doyne to turn Tasso into English blank verse was the example of Milton, to whom Tasso was usually supposed to have lent scenes and suggestions. Doyne tried to model his measures on Milton, and went so far as to excuse "some lines in this Poem that may not appear to some readers as harmonious" on the ground that "there are many such lines in Milton, which, to a reader who hath a true ear for that poet, will be found a great and necessary beauty in his versification." Now (1762) appeared an anonymous "dialogue of the dead" in which Tasso and Milton compared their own lives and works in minute detail. This rather interesting work was called *Il Tasso, a Dialogue: the Speakers John Milton, Torquato Tasso, in Which New Light Is Thrown on Their Poetical and Moral Characters*. In this work Milton tends, in the spirit of Doyne and in spite of Baretti, to prefer Tasso to Ariosto, though Tasso directly echoes Baretti when he says he understands that Marino "has robbed the Italian Muses of more honour than he has brought them; for the Moderns, I am informed, have generally made their judgments of our poetry from what they have read of his; which is the same thing as to judge of *Homer* by the works of *Chærilus*." After finding all sorts of ingenious similarities in their lives and poems, the poets agree, in Milton's words, that "we possess unrivalled the summits of the modern Parnassus." On their quitting each other, Milton expresses, without too much condescension, a wish to "visit your great predecessors in the laurel, my old acquaintance *Dante* and *Petrarcha*." Tasso promises to see to it that even more distinguished company shall attend this reunion: "*Petrarcha* shall introduce you to his *Laura*, and *Dante* shall present you to his *Buon Maestro*, and him

— Con la spada in mano,

Homero, poeta sovrano."<sup>24</sup>

The same year as *Il Tasso*, appeared Richard Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* which, incidentally to a larger purpose, not only summed up that new sympathy with Italy's romantic poets which had produced the translations of Huggins and Doyne, but did a great deal to enlarge and diffuse it. One of Hurd's

<sup>24</sup> Not in Toynbee. Misquoted from *Inferno* IV, 86-88.



points was that the chivalric manners depicted by these poets and others were not a crazy, as was generally supposed, but a "reasonable" way of life, in view of the political and economic organization of the Middle Ages. He was unable, however, to root his fondness for supernatural creatures and adventures in the respectable soil of reason. A churchman, he found it expedient to be merely dogmatic. Wizards, giants, flame-ringed castles, and flying horses are, he said, peculiarly well adapted to the ends of poetry, which are to stir the feelings and touch the breast with awe. "The greatest geniuses of our own and foreign countries, such as *Ariosto* and *Tasso* in *Italy*, and *Spenser* and *Milton* in *England*, were seduced by these barbarities of our forefathers, were even charmed by the *Gothic* romances. Was this caprice and absurdity in them? Or may there not be something in the *Gothic* romance peculiarly suited to the views of a genius, and the ends of poetry?" Neither Barette, Huggins, Warton, nor Doynne had dared to defend their poets on a ground where approval smacked strongly of credulity. For the first time in print,<sup>26</sup> apparently, a critic dared to oppose the verdict of the heart to that of the head in this crucial matter. The supernatural element in chivalric manners, said Hurd, has made the fancies of our great modern poets "more sublime, more terrible, and more alarming than those of the classic fablers." This cut at the current classicism he elaborated into a critical dogma, still associated with his name. "What are *Virgil's* myrtles dropping blood to *Tasso's* enchanted forest?" It is a shame that *Tasso*, *Boiardo*, and *Ariosto* should have been so long neglected in *England* merely because the French and Frenchified English critics will not allow poets to introduce demons, fairies, and necromancers into their tales. The heart tells us, he insisted, that "these *Lyes* of *Gothic* invention" are one of their greatest charms. But only one. Then, in a fine passage, Hurd summed up those merits of the Italian poets which Barette had formerly pointed out. "The enchanting sweetness of their tongue, the richness of their invention, the fire and elevation of their genius, the splendor of their expression on great subjects, and the native simplicity of their sentiments on affecting ones; all

<sup>26</sup> See Collins' *Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland*, written in 1749, but not printed until 1788.

these are such manifest advantages on the side of the *Italian* poets as should seem to command our highest admiration of their great and capital works." "*Chi non sa che cosa sia Italia?*"

Plenty of Englishmen, unfortunately; but they were learning.

Partly stimulated by Hurd, there appeared in the very next year (1763) still another complete translation of Tasso. John Hoole, the son of a watchmaker, was born in London in 1727. He early obtained a situation as clerk in the East India Company's Office, where he eventually became principal auditor. Most of his leisure time he occupied with translations from the Italian, and retired from the India House in 1785 to give himself up entirely to this delightful vocation. Hoole seems to have been a meager ledger-man who sought a refuge from the countinghouse in the fairyland of Italian poetry. Somewhat dry, in both his person and his poetry, he unwove many a rainbow in the course of turning Italian octaves into English heroic couplets. For Tasso and, later, Ariosto he did, however, something like what Dryden and Pope had done for Virgil and Homer. He adapted them to the rather sterile taste of his times, and thus gave them a popularity which Huggins and Doyne could never have won for them. We must remember that the 1760's were not the 1820's. In the former, however, the latter were implicit. Hoole's disinfected couplets made it possible for Johnson to recommend the book to the queen herself in a dedication which Boswell thought a masterpiece of elegance. They made it possible for readers to dare to mingle the Italian poets with Homer and Virgil on their bookshelves. They made it possible for a kind aunt in the country to give a visiting boy, probably by means of a "respectable subscription library," his first peeps into a world where he was one day to become as much at home as the Italians themselves. It was in Hoole's translations that Scott first read Tasso and Ariosto.

Hoole's lengthy preface to his translation of Tasso did nothing to advance the criticism of that writer in England. For his high critical estimate of the poem he relied chiefly on Hurd and Voltaire, to the latter of whom Doyne, as we have seen, had also gone. Hoole, oddly enough, seems not to have heard of the Irish translator. Neither, it appears, had Dr. Johnson, who gave Hoole "leave to publish it, as his opinion, that a modern translation of

the *JERUSALEM DELIVERED* is a work that may very justly merit the attention of the English reader. . ." Everyone will remember that Dr. Johnson subjoined to his life of Waller (1779) several stanzas of Fairfax's Elizabethan version of Tasso—a "work which, after Mr. Hoole's translation, will perhaps not be soon reprinted." The popularity of Hoole's translation is attested by the appearance of two more editions of the book before 1770, and another seven before 1815. Not for long could Hoole lament, as in his preface, that "Of all authors so familiarly known by name to the generality of English readers as Tasso, perhaps there is none whose works have been so little read. . ."

To his translation Hoole also prefixed a new "Life of Tasso," much more full and carefully considered than Layng's. Hoole, of course, told the story of Tasso's imprisonment to the discredit of the hard-minded Duke of Ferrara. He believed, of course, in his poet's hopeless love for the Este princess, and that it was hopelessly returned. He knew that there had been three possible Eleonoras to whom Tasso might have addressed his sighs and sonnets, but considered the first two mere "blinds" which the poet had used to mislead his enemies. In this connection Hoole translated some of Tasso's lyric poems—among the first to be turned into English since Jacobean days—more especially the sonnets beginning, "Se d'Icaro leggesti," and "Tre gran donne vid'io."

As for Hoole's translation of the *Gerusalemme*, we may quote just a few lines from it for the sake of enabling the reader to compare it with Doyne's. It is thus that Hoole rendered the sultry scene in the Canary Islands:

Now in a braid she bound her flowing hair;  
Now smooth'd the roving locks with decent care.  
Part, with her hand, in shining curls she roll'd,  
And deck'd with azure flowers the waving gold.  
Her veil compos'd, with roses sweet she dress'd  
The native lilies of her fragrant breast.  
Not half so proud, of glorious plumage vain,  
The peacock sets to view his glittering train;  
Not Iris shews so fair, when dewy skies  
Reflect the changeful light with various dyes.  
But o'er the rest her wondrous cestus shin'd,  
Whose mystic round her tender waist confin'd.

Tancredi's amazing moment in the enchanted forest Hoole reproduced in nerveless singsong:

At length, resolv'd, his shining steel he drew,  
And struck the tree, when (dreadful to the view!)  
The wounded bark a sanguine current shed,  
And stain'd the grassy turf with streaming red.

The passage preferred by Hazlitt to all others in Tasso, indifferently done in Doyne, dwindled in Hoole to merely this:

Ill-fated Carthage! scarce, amidst the plains,  
A trace of all her ruin'd pomp remains!  
Proud cities vanish, states and realms decay,  
The world's unstable glories fade away!  
Yet mortals dare of certain fate complain;  
O impious folly of presuming man!

Before leaving our Italian epic poets for a time, we may note how the growing English taste for them was strengthened by a British edition and a translation of Carlo Denina's hasty history of Italian and other literatures known as a *Discorso sopra le vicende della letteratura*. Denina was "Professore di Eloquenza e Umane Lettere" in the Royal Schools of Turin. His work, which is definitely an attempt to see all literature as the outgrowth of political, social, and economic conditions, was perhaps the first history of Italian letters to receive particular attention in England. Denina seems to have had Scottish friends, to one of whom, "the Right Honourable the Lady Eliza Mackenzie," he dedicated the British edition of his work which was brought out in Glasgow in 1763. Eight years later it was translated by John Murdoch as *An Essay on the Revolutions of Literature*. This book, though short and precipitate, undoubtedly helped to prepare Englishmen for a historical appreciation of Italian literature, and to confirm them in their growing affection for Tasso, Ariosto, Dante, and other Italian poets. Again an Italian explained to Englishmen how "that sad and melancholy air" which breathes through the *Divina commedia* was related to the rabid intestine wars of the Guelphs and Ghibellines. He affirmed that Italians find, "even to-day, in that gloomy lugubrious subject, and in the midst of Dante's obscurities of style—we find, I say—such an abundance of poetic images

and sublime and pleasing sentiments, such an immense fund of cognitions of every kind, and such a just and profound critique of human manners that we may frankly affirm that there has not been since Homer any poet more original than Dante, nor one guided by a more vivid and discerning imagination."<sup>28</sup>

Italian epics bearing a British imprint in these days include Tasso's *Gerusalemme* (1763), Forteguerri's *Ricciardetto* (1767), Corsini's *Torracchione desolato* (1768), and Pulci's *Morgante Maggiore* (1768). The Tasso was published in Glasgow. The Forteguerri, the Corsini, and the Pulci, though bearing a London imprint, were all published in Paris. Whether the *Ricciardetto* and *Torracchione* sold as well in London as their publisher, Prault, probably hoped, is doubtful, for neither Baretti, Martinelli, nor Denina had paid much attention to these particular mock epics. For the *Morgante*, however, we may imagine a kinder fate. Baretti had early praised Pulci, as we have seen, and in the *Manners and Customs of Italy* (1768) he called the *Morgante* "no less delightful than the *Furioso* itself."

In 1767 the young Charles James Fox, then enjoying a sojourn in Italy, "devoured Dante and Ariosto." Though young travellers of an earlier date may possibly have done as much, I think we may permit ourselves to find in this statement something of the influence of Baretti, Warton, and Hurd. The full measure of the change that had occurred since 1755 Fox indicated when he wrote to his friend, Richard Fitzpatrick: "For God's sake, learn Italian as fast as you can, if it be only to read Ariosto. There is more good poetry in Italian than in all other languages that I understand put together."

#### HOOLE AGAIN, AND SOME OTHERS: METASTASIO TRANSLATED AND IMITATED: 1760-1770

In addition to the epic materials we have just been discussing, Italian drama, especially the modern, attained some recognition in England in these days. It was even imitated to a certain extent, thus offering us what seems to be the first instance of direct

<sup>28</sup> My translation. Neither the Glasgow edition of Denina nor Murdoch's translation is noticed in Toynbee.

Italian literary influence to be exerted on English letters in many years. For this reason the revived English interest in the Italian theatre deserves a few minutes of our attention. I do not mean, of course, to say anything about the Italian opera in England, with its numerous English imitations. I am talking about farces, comedies, tragi-comedies, and tragedies, which were either strictly such, or were supposed to be able to please as such without their original musical additions and interludes.

In the middle of the eighteenth century Englishmen had a very low opinion of contemporary Italian drama, and showed no curiosity about the history of the Italian theatre. This attitude led them to overlook the not inconsiderable charm of certain rather ceremonious and "learned," yet historically interesting, tragedies and comedies by Trissino, Dolce, Ariosto, Machiavelli, and others. It also prejudiced them to some extent against the really original and often lovely pastorals of Tasso, Guarini, and Bonarelli della Rovere, instinct with the life of the petty but elegant Italian courts of the Renaissance. We can hardly blame Englishmen, however, for their indifference to the lifeless plays of early eighteenth-century writers like Martelli and Gravina, especially when we remember that the best of these, Maffei's *Merope*, was allowed a certain English success. We must also agree that the *commedia dell'arte* was pretty much what it seemed to "enlightened" Englishmen—a vulgar and immoral business, with nothing to teach the legitimate theatre.

In the second quarter of the eighteenth century, however, there had appeared in Italy two writers for the stage who were destined to awaken respect for the Italian theatre. These were Metastasio and Goldoni. As mere librettists, these writers had a considerable effect on English opera, grand and comic. This aspect of their influence I must pass over, however, for the sake of indicating something of their effect on serious English drama. Of Metastasio, Baretti had written, you remember, that his plays, though intended for music, could be enjoyed in and of themselves as tragi-comedies of a very high type. Metastasio had, in a sense, gone back to the Renaissance pastorals for the tone, atmosphere, and lovely language of his dramas, and had succeeded in creating something fairly vital. Goldoni, for his part, had poured such fresh contempo-

rary life into the stock figures of the *commedia dell'arte* that he had slowly transfigured them from puppets into men and women whose parts could no longer be acted in masks. Both these writers, by going to genuine sources of inspiration, had succeeded in producing plays with which the rather lifeless theatres of Europe were glad to reckon. To the English stage that reckoning brought something, however insubstantial, which we may try to sum up here.

The following point may, I suppose, be made about Goldoni's comedies, and if, in this respect, the English comedies of the latter half of the eighteenth century seem to have gained tone—as in the works of Thomas Holcroft or Mrs. Elizabeth Griffith—the effect may be in some part assigned to the practice of the Venetian lawyer. Many of his plays have a virtue in which the European comedies of the time were often sadly lacking: that is, beautifully simple plots, uncomplicated by underplots, which begin in, grow in accordance with, and are wound up by, the moral characters of the *dramatis personæ*. The everyday language of Goldoni's characters is not humorous; it is the folly of human nature that makes the spectator laugh, or sometimes cry. Since Molière, perhaps, no more truly comic dramatist had appeared in Europe. In 1756 and 1757 two of his plays, *Pamela* and *Il padre di famiglia*, were translated, clearly by an Italian master who found it impossible to turn his author into idiomatic English. Both these, though long, were good examples of Goldoni's virtues as a comic writer, and may be supposed to have found a wide reading public. Allardyce Nicoll says that throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century Goldoni's "style was eagerly watched by dramatists in London." Though he does not name Goldoni, the anonymous writer of *An Essay on the Present State of the Theatre in France, England, and Italy* (1760) 'admits that Italian comedies often, "with a refined and delicate satire, discover a perfect knowledge of the manners of the age. . ." In 1764 Samuel Foote, about as vigorous a comic spirit as England could boast in those days, seems to have made use of Goldoni's *Bugiardo* in his *Lyar*, though he also drew on Steele's *Lying Lover* (derivative, like Goldoni's own play, from Corneille's *Menteur*). After this date Goldoni

slowly became a living, if rather elusive, force in English comedy. His vitality enabled him to succeed even in the teeth of Barette, who damned him in the *Manners and Customs of Italy* (1768), apparently for his uncouth and unpoetical language, as the "chief object of contempt with all of those Italians who are not canaille . . . !" In place of his lively plays Barette recommended the dramatic fairy tales of his Venetian rival, Carlo Gozzi, for their "intricacy of plot, multiplicity of incidents, variety of decoration," and so on—precisely those dramatic pests for which Goldoni offered the theatre a disinfectant.

It was Italy's tragic and pseudotragic dramatists, however, who made the most stir in England in these days. John Cleland's *Titus Vespasian* (1754) was modelled after Metastasio's *Clemenza di Tito*, while John Home's *Douglas* (1757) seems to have been inspired by Maffei's *Merope*, which still continued to be admired. Goldsmith, in his pessimistic *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* (1759), after despairing of Italian literature, added: "One or two poets indeed seem at present born to redeem the honour of their country. Metastasio has restored nature in all her simplicity. And Maffei is the first that has introduced a tragedy among his countrymen without a love-plot." Barette's claim that Metastasio was a great dramatist, best read without music and comparable to Shakespeare himself in his knowledge of human nature, was not long in getting abroad. The author of the *Present State of the Theatre*, referred to above, hailed Metastasio's plays as "of a merit not inferior to that of the productions of Sophocles, Æschylus, and Euripides." Soon Arthur Murphy adapted *The Desert Island* (1760), a short play in three acts, from a piece of his called *L'isola disabitata*, in which Metastasio's famous understanding of human nature was thought to be attested by his idea that a young girl, though brought up from infancy in utter ignorance of men and taught to hate them, will flirt at the first sight of one. The popularity of *L'isola disabitata* is further attested by the fact that in 1766 John Hoole, at the special request of Dr. Johnson—perhaps in payment for the latter's dedication to his *Tasso*—translated it literally for inclusion in Anna Williams' *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse*. This transla-



tion, known as *The Uninhabited Island*, continues to be attributed to Mrs. Williams, though Hoole told the true story of its composition in 1800.<sup>27</sup>

It was indeed the ledger-man of the East India Office who served Metastasio his best turn in England. Before coming to Hoole's more important translations, however, we may pause to notice *An Essay on the Opera* (1767), translated from Count Algarotti's *Saggio sopra l'opera*, a work dedicated by the famous *philosophe*, to indicate the dignity of the subject, to William Pitt! Here Algarotti explained that opera, perfectly practised, is the exact equivalent of Greek tragedy. Practically no modern writer, he admitted, with the possible exception of Metastasio, does so practise it. As a sample of what an ideal libretto should be—the equal of a Euripidean drama—Algarotti appended to his essay a play of his own, *Ifigenia in Aulide*, by which his translator did well enough. Algarotti varied the usual tale by making Iphigenia proudly accept her fate as the price she has to pay for her lover, Achilles', fame on the fields of Troy. The *philosophe* took good care to sprinkle his drama with abundance of such noble and natural sentiments as might challenge comparison with Metastasio himself. In 1768 an anonymous English author applauded Algarotti to the echo in *The Lyric Muse Revived in Europe*. Thus Englishmen were told, if not indeed taught, to think of an Italian opera libretto, once despised as unspeakable nonsense, as comparable in respect of character-drawing, sentiment, and poetry to a Greek or Elizabethan drama.

At this point it appeared to the translator of Tasso that some of the best plays of "the Sophocles of the Italian stage" should be made available to English readers. Up to this time (1767) they had been known only in the abridged and mutilated form in which they always appeared when served up with music. Hoole wanted Englishmen to see that "his dramas have, in a high degree, the beauties of tragedy," and in theatrical management excel most modern dramas. By tragedy Hoole meant what we generally call tragi-comedy. In practically all Metastasio's dramas the chief characters, after suffering the severest distress, are made happy,

<sup>27</sup> See preface to *Dramas and Other Poems of the Abbé Pietro Metastasio*. Allardyce Nicoll gives it to Williams.

and the villains, no matter how deeply dyed, are usually forgiven. Besides evincing a decidedly Shakespearean skill in character-drawing, Metastasio's works were said to abound in Shakespearelike morals and maxims. For years he was famous for the *massime* and *sentenze* which industrious editors were able to cull from his books. To-day, however, most readers are puzzled to find in Metastasio any virtues except those of skillful theatrical management and a certain amount of "linkèd sweetness."

The plays which Hoole translated in 1767 as *The Works of Metastasio* included *Artaserse*, *L'olimpiade*, *Issipile*, *La clemenza di Tito*, *Demetrio*, and *Demofonte*. A brief résumé of the plots of these "tragedies" will give some surprise to a literal-minded reader. In *Artaxerxes* the life of the prince of that name is threatened by Artaban, an ambitious subject, who has already slain King Xerxes, imputing his crime to his own son, Arbaces. *But* Arbaces saves Artaxerxes, and gets his wicked father's sentence commuted! In *The Olympiad* two friends, Lycidas and Megacles, both love Aristea, daughter of King Clisthenes. Lycidas loses her hand and endangers his life by almost murdering the stern father. *But* Lycidas turns out to be Aristea's twin brother, long ago exposed to death because an oracle had foretold the attempt on his father's life. In *Hypsipyle* Eurynome, to revenge the exile of her son, Learchus—a would-have-been ravisher of King Thoas's daughter, Hypsipyle—persuades the women of Lemnos to exterminate all the males in the kingdom. Hypsipyle risks her own life by sparing her father's. *But* her fiancé, Jason, arrives with his Argonauts in time to save both father and child. In *Demetrius* Cleonice, Queen of Syria, seems to be about to break her heart for the warlike shepherd, Alcestes, because her people demand that she choose a spouse of noble blood. Alcestes, *however*, turns out to be Demetrius, son of the rightful king of Syria, from whom Cleonice's father had formerly usurped the realm. In *Titus* the said emperor's great friend, Sextus, driven on by the jealous Vitellia, raises a conspiracy against the throne. Titus is saved, *however*, and pardons all concerned, though he refuses to wed Vitellia, toward whom he had for a time softened. In *Demophoon* the king of that name orders his son, Timanthes—privately married to

Dirce—to espouse the Phrygian princess, Creusa, at the same time that he orders Dirce, for the recalcitrance of her father, Mathusius, to be sacrificed, according to the yearly custom, to Apollo. *But* Timanthes turns out to be the son of Mathusius; Dirce, the daughter of the king. Timanthes' so-called younger brother, Cherinthus, is thus left free to marry the Phrygian princess, for whom he has been pining. After these flashlight résumés of Metastasio's "tragedies," the reader will probably bless me for sparing him samples of the Italian's "natural" sentiments and heroic truisms. The following song, recited by Hypsipyle's aged father as he goes to help rescue her from the Amazon destroyers of his kingdom, was considered by Hoole and other connoisseurs of the day a masterpiece of pathos:

The turtle, when she once espies  
The un pitying churl that robb'd her nest,  
Feels the fierce flame of fury rise,  
Till then a stranger to her breast:

And though no strength of claws or bill  
To guard her helpless young avails,  
At least the cruel spoiler still  
She with unceasing cries assails.

In 1768 John Hoole's *Cyrus, a Tragedy* was produced at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden. This was closely founded on Metastasio's *Ciro riconosciuto*, and many of the most "pathetic" and "natural" speeches were translated from the Italian. Its name of tragedy must accordingly be understood in the sense defined above. In this play Astyages, the tyrannous King of Persia, continues to pursue the lives of his son-in-law, Cambyzes, and his grandson, Cyrus, whom he has persecuted ever since, twenty years before, he banished the former and exposed the latter, then a babe, to wild animals. But fate, in the form of Astyages' honest but vengeful prime minister, Harpagus, foils him again and again, and finally (contrary to Metastasio) brings about his death. Cyrus, of course, mounts the throne, embraces his long-lost mother, and welcomes his father home from weary years of exile. "Natural sentiments" are tossed about like mouldy roses. They seem to have been

prized, however, by the Covent Garden audience. Mrs. Yates, who played the part of the mother who, when only a girl of thirteen, had borne Cyrus, told in the epilogue of an interview she had had with the bard, Mr. Hoole:

Says I—when first he offer'd me the part,  
I hope 'tis nature—levell'd at the heart!  
Says he—a husband thought far off to roam,  
Disguis'd, and unexpectedly comes home.  
A son returns, lost twenty years, d'ye see,  
To call you mother, tho' not thirty-three.  
This (I reply'd) will do, if I can guess,  
For this indeed is natural distress—

Two years later (1770) Hoole had another play performed at Covent Garden. This, called *Timanthes*, was founded directly on *Demofoonte*, which he had already translated. He did not make a single important alteration in the story, kept most of the names, and drew heavily upon his translation for the more moving speeches. For instance, the passage in which Timanthes pleads with his father to spare Dirce (here called Ismena)—the woman to whom he is secretly married—from the sacrificial altar is taken almost directly from his translation:

And shall she perish!—think you view her now  
In early bloom of life, who never knew  
The thoughts of guilt, stretch'd on the fatal altar  
In all the pangs of suffering—think you see  
The life-warm blood gush from her tender breast. . .

Hoole also kept, of course, the happy ending in which all knots are cleft by the fortunate discovery that Timanthes and his bride had been changed when infants in the cradle. George Colman, who wrote the epilogue to *Timanthes*, noted that Hoole's tragedies were decidedly different from the plays usually called by that name:

What horrors fill the tragic poet's brain!  
Plague, murder, rape, and incest crowd his train. . .  
Our gentler poet, in soft opera bred,  
Italian crotchets singing in his head,  
Winds to a prosp'rous end the fine-drawn tale,  
And roars—but roars like any nightingale.

It was in Hoole's imitations, insignificant though they were, that Italian writing again definitely became, after many years of quiescence, a living force in shaping English literature.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS: THE APPRECIATION OF ITALIAN ART  
SUBTILIZED: 1768, WITH A LOOK BEFORE AND AFTER

Painting, as we have seen, was, perhaps, the side of Italian achievement about which Englishmen knew and cared most in 1755. For forty or fifty years past the English nobility had been vigorously purchasing Italian pictures, and professing to appreciate the excellences of design, color, chiaroscuro, expression, and so forth which were supposed to characterize the various Italian schools. This love of Italian pictures was, however, dry and didactic, and went hand in hand with the fashion of poking fun at the great artists for foibles in anatomy and anachronisms in costume, architecture, or religious history. When Daniel Webb wrote his *Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting* in 1760, he was not quite sure just how to sum up the English attitude toward Italian art. In one breath he talked of "the ambition most men have to be thought judges of painting," while in the next he asked: "By what fatality has it been that a nation, eminent for its productions in poetry and eloquence, capable of the greatest efforts of genius, and blest with the happiest sensibility, should, for so many ages, with a kind of wilful and Gothic rudeness, have withstood the allurements of this divine art?" He still felt it necessary in 1760 to caution English travellers against rushing through galleries and making an obvious display of "acuteness in detecting little errors in drawing, or lapses of the pencil." "There is more true taste in drawing forth one latent beauty than in observing a hundred obvious imperfections."

While Webb's general advice was good, his specific criticisms of the Italian painters were mere echoes of Piles and Dufresnoy. With all the old academic ceremony he conferred the palm for color on Titian; for chiaroscuro on Correggio; for composition on Leonardo da Vinci; and for that "grace" or "elegant simplicity" which is the heart of design—the very soul of painting—on Raphael, in whom we never meet "the affected contrasts of Michael

Angelo. . ." Raphael, Correggio, and Titian were the trinity of painting. After them came, in the estimation of most Englishmen, Veronese, Tintoretto, and the school of Bologna, including the Carracci, Domenichino, Guido Reni, and Guercino. The popularity of these last seems to have been steadily increasing since the beginning of the eighteenth century. In their own day they had set out self-consciously to combine Florentine design with Venetian coloring and Parmesan chiaroscuro. Now they began to be taken at their own evaluation. Sometimes it seems as if their eclectic elegance was prized above the graces of Raphael himself. This school, always well thought of, enjoyed European notoriety after the publication of Charles Nicolas Cochin's *Voyage d'Italie* (Paris, 1758). What Cochin, who was artistic arbiter to the French queen, admired in painting was courtly elegance on one hand; on the other, somber heroics. Thus he came to lay great stress on Tintoretto, Veronese, the Carracci, and Guido Reni. This last he often seems to have preferred above all other Italian painters, perhaps because he was sometimes able to flash his heroics with courtly sunshine. The popularity of the Bolognese school in England is fully attested by Thomas Martyn's *English Connoisseur* (1766), a guidebook to English-owned pictures, in which the author asked the nobility to make their collections accessible to the public—"The polite arts are rising in Britain, and call for the fostering hand of the rich and powerful. . ." From this book it is clear that the Italian artists were owned, if not prized, in the following order: Veronese, the Carracci, Reni, Bassano, Maratti, Titian, Albano, Tintoretto, Cortona, Guercino, and Domenichino.

We have already seen in Edward Clarke's *Letter to a Friend in Italy* just what kind of verses the love of academic excellence and courtly elegance in painting was capable of producing. Before leaving this literal and uninspired poetical criticism for something several shades warmer—or more romantic—we may pause here to "judge" the great painters once more, this time from an anonymous poem called *Ancient and Modern Rome* (1760). In this the goddess of painting presents "pencils" to each of her dear sons, with a commendatory speech, in the following order:

"Thou, my RAPHAEL, go  
 Prosp'rous, and on the VATICAN's proud Walls  
 Fix an eternal Name; an Air divine,  
 Sublimity of Thought, and Touch correct  
 Shall mark thy Labours 'till, in ONE combin'd,  
 Thy ev'ry Pow'r shall shine, and Nature's self  
 Grow jealous of thy Skill.\* CORREGGIO, thou  
 By thy own Genius great, shall point new Ways,  
 Happy in all.—Thy Portion, TITIAN, take  
 In Harmony of Colour; PAOLO, thine  
 In Grace and Spirit.—Yours, be Judgment deep,  
 CARACCI, and Invention rare; from whom  
 The Art shall gain new Lustre, and a Line  
 Of learn'd Disciples spring.—Expression bold  
 And Beauty of Design shall bless thy Works,  
 DOMINICHINO; Elegance and Ease,  
 My GUIDO, thine adorn. For Grandeur, Taste,  
 And Composition rich, CORTONA, live  
 Unrival'd; while, in Force and Shadows strong,  
 None shall excel thee, GUERCIN, last, not least."

\* The Picture alluded to is the TRANSFIGURATION, now in the Church of St. PIETRO MONTORIO, at ROME, esteemed the finest Picture in the World. RAPHAEL died just as he finished it, and it was carried before his Body to the Grave.

It is interesting to note, here as always, the absence of Michelangelo. While this great artist was admitted to have excelled in sculpture, it was impossible for the travellers of the time to relish his "Last Judgment" with its wild nudes, its mixture of pagan with Christian figures, and its ill-concealed horseplay. Characteristic of the current attitude toward him was the popularity of the following epigram, translated from *Le satire* of Salvator Rosa:

Good Michael Angelo, I do not jest,  
 Thy pencil a Great Judgment hath exprest;  
 But in that judgment thou, alas, hast shown  
 A very little judgment of thy own!<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Rosa puts these words, according to tradition, in the mouth of "un tal cavalier con faccia austera," generally supposed to be Messer Biagio, the pope's Master of Ceremonies, whom Michelangelo painted among the damned; but Englishmen were content to wrest them from their context.

The resurrection of Michelangelo was somehow crucial to what we may call the romantic appreciation of Italian art. What the romanticists wanted in painting was not so much the courtly elegance of the Venetians, or the impeccably correct style of the Bolognese, as certain overpowering emotions which they could associate with nature and God. Along with the unities and rules of drama and poetry, they liked to discard the endless chatter about design, composition, color, correct anatomy, and historical accuracy in painting. They were more interested in the effect of painting than in the means by which it had been obtained. And they demanded that the effect be of a deeply moving kind, awakening in the spectator a sense of human inadequacy, pity, and all those thoughts that lie too deep for tears. For a long time the French critics had talked about the beau ideal in art, saying that the painter did not so much copy nature as improve it according to ideas of beauty which he brought from heaven. This charming Platonic commonplace the romanticists insisted on taking literally. But, literally taken, this criterion cut against most of the Italian artists favored in France. In Raphael, Correggio, and Guido one could, of course, find divine hints and a source of dissatisfaction with daily life, but most of the Venetian and Bolognese painters had finally to be dismissed as mere skillful purveyors of the superficialities of existence, whether brilliant or somber. It must be remembered that I am speaking of the high romantics, for their predecessors never, so far as I know, achieved any very significant statement of this point of view. Only with regard to Michelangelo did they really wage a battle against the academic criticism of painting at all comparable to that which they carried on in the field of literature in behalf of Dante and Ariosto.

It is not altogether odd that the Englishman who made the first solid and brilliant defense of Michelangelo should have been the man who painted a famous picture of Ugolino and his dying children in the Pisan Tower of Famine. What is odd, however, is the fact that these revolutionary sentiments should have issued from the mouth of a man who had ostensibly spent his life trying to combine in his pictures something of the color of the Venetians with the sweetness of Correggio and the grand style of the Carracci.



It seems to be a fact, however sad, that Reynolds, as he approached the end of it, felt that his life had been, from the point of view of artistic accomplishment, misspent. As a portrait painter he had made money, but such success, at the end, seemed merely a snare which had seduced him from the path to true greatness. He was angry with his countrymen for their refusal to support any branch of painting which did not serve to perpetuate their muffinlike faces. He was continually working to awaken in the British nobility a love of what was called in those days "historical" painting, and took an active part in various movements to improve the status and scope of British painters. It was partly a desire to force "historical" painting down his compatriots' throats that led him to play a managerial rôle in the Society of British Artists (1762-64) and to accept with pleasure the presidency of the Royal Academy, when instituted by George III in 1768. His yearly lectures as president of the Academy were intended to set the feet of young British painters in the path from which he himself had been diverted. That path was the way of Michelangelo.

Just how Reynolds came to appreciate the great Tuscan in a day when he was usually belittled or entirely neglected in France and England can be partly explained by his three years' study in Italy, his familiarity with the Italian language, and his friendships among the men of that nation, who were usually to be found on the side of the most vivid of their old geniuses—Dante in poetry, or Michelangelo in painting. For the benefit of the struggling Society of British Artists Count Algarotti, apparently at the request of Reynolds himself, wrote his *Saggio sopra la pittura*, or advice on the education and training of an artist, translated into English in 1764 as *An Essay on Painting*. Algarotti, while observing that "RAPHAEL is now universally allowed to have attained that degree of perfection beyond which it is scarce lawful for mortals to aspire," seems to have ranked Michelangelo even higher than the former for his demonic power of invention. This power Michelangelo won, he says, because he was "not ashamed, in some of his compositions, to Dantize,"<sup>29</sup> as Phidias and Apelles may be said

<sup>29</sup> Toynbee quotes this use of the word "Dantize" from a résumé of Algarotti's book published in the *Annual Register* for 1764, but he does not

formerly to have Homerized." By comparison with him, Raphael is merely the Virgil of painting. William Brown, who translated Dolce's *Dialogo della pittura* as *Aretin; a Dialogue on Painting* (1770)—to be used as a guide by both artists and amateurs "at this time, when, after several attempts to establish the arts of painting and sculpture in this kingdom, we at length have a fair prospect of their settling among us"—quoted Fabrini's judgment that, as Dante is the first of Italian poets, so is Michelangelo the first among modern painters and sculptors.<sup>30</sup> This whole dialogue, the reader will remember, is a protracted comparison between Raphael and Michelangelo, often to the disadvantage of the former. It was partly from Italian works like these, partly from his own intense impressions, that Sir Joshua Reynolds drew his apotheosis of Michelangelo.

From the first *Discourse* (1769) to the last (1790), all of which we may as well consider at this point, we find Sir Joshua urging young English painters to immerse themselves in the spirit of the Sistine Chapel, where great art in painting had not only its birth but its culmination. Raphael, he admitted, must, perhaps, be considered superior to Michelangelo if we consult our judgment rather than our heart. Yet it was the Sistine Chapel that transformed Raphael from "a dry, Gothic, and even insipid" painter into a great artist. In the fifth *Discourse* Reynolds launched out into a comparison of these two which immediately transfigured Michelangelo into a great hero of the romantic spirit:

Though our judgment must, upon the whole, decide in favour of Raffaele, yet he never takes such a firm hold and entire possession of the mind as to make us desire nothing else, and to feel nothing wanting. The effect of the capital works of Michel Angelo perfectly corresponds to what Bouchardon said he felt from reading Homer: his whole frame appeared to himself to be enlarged, and all nature which surrounded him, diminished to atoms.

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seem to have seen the *Essay* itself, or to have been aware of its authorship. Farther on in this book Algarotti points out, quoting the first six lines of the last canto of the *Commedia*, that it is to Dante we must ascribe Michelangelo's "making the Virgin look at her son on the cross with a dry and studdy [sic] eye"—another Dante reference missed by Toynbee.

<sup>30</sup> Not in Toynbee.

If we put these great artists in a light of comparison with each other, Raffaele had more taste and fancy; Michel Angelo, more genius and imagination. The one excelled in beauty, the other in energy. Michel Angelo has more of the poetical inspiration; his ideas are vast and sublime; his people are a superior order of beings; there is nothing about them, nothing in the air of their actions, or their attitudes, or the style and cast of their limbs or features, that reminds us of their belonging to our own species. Raffaele's imagination is not so elevated; his figures are not so much disjoined from our own diminutive race of beings. . .

"If," said Reynolds in conclusion, "if, as Longinus thinks, the sublime, being the highest excellence that human composition can attain to, abundantly compensates the absence of every other beauty, and atones for all other deficiencies, then Michel Angelo demands the preference" over his rival. And if we agree with Reynolds that Michelangelo is superior to Raphael, must we not devalue the lauded Venetians and even the Bolognese? The merely elegant style affected by the former, Titian excepted, he could "by no means allow" to be spoken of in the same breath with the grand style of Raphael and Michelangelo: "The principles by which each is attained are so contrary to each other that they seem, in my opinion, incompatible, and as impossible to exist together as that in the mind the most sublime ideas and the lowest sensuality should at the same time be united." As for the Carracci, he felt that however successfully they may have adopted "the mechanical part" of Michelangelo's practice, "the divine part, which addresses itself to the imagination, . . . was beyond their grasp; they formed, however, a most respectable School, a style more on the level, and calculated to please a great number. . ." Reynolds must have been aware, painfully aware, that in these comparisons he was attacking the foundations on which his own artistic house was built. But he was an old man now (the last quotation is from the *fifteenth Discourse*), bent on saving British art from an ignominious career of mere portraiture. In this last appeal he lashed out again and again in defense of those "powerful impulses of a mind unused to subjection of any kind, and too high to be controlled by cold criticism," in comparison with which the correct judgment,

pure taste, and exquisite grace of Raphael, Correggio, and the Carracci pale into nothingness. Again and again he lamented that the "wild, mysterious" style of Angelo, "which may, poetically speaking, he called the language of the Gods, now no longer exists. . ." In conclusion he almost broke into premonitions of *Adonais*, where he told young artists, eager to see something of heaven on earth, to go to Rome, ending:

[I]t will not, I hope, be thought presumptuous in me to appear in the train, I cannot say of his imitators, but of his admirers. I have taken another course, one more suited to my abilities, and to the taste of the times in which I live. Yet, however unequal I feel myself to the attempt, were I now to begin the world again, I would tread in the steps of that great master: to kiss the hem of his garment, to catch the slightest of his perfections, would be glory and distinction enough for an ambitious man.

I feel a self-congratulation in knowing myself capable of such sensations as he intended to excite. I reflect, not without vanity, that these Discourses bear testimony of my admiration of that truly divine man; and I should desire the last words which I should pronounce in this Academy, and from this place, might be the name of Michel Angelo.

Thus, by a man who is sometimes considered just such another type of his times as Dr. Johnson himself, was a new way of judging Italian pictures—a way which people later called romantic—introduced into England. Unfortunately, it will not be within the limits of this book that we shall find this fresh attitude bear precious fruit. This is so true that it will hardly be worth our while to devote another whole section to Italian painting in our entire study. Nearly all those English travellers who wrote extensively of Italian art—Lady Miller (*Letters from Italy*, 1776), Stephen Weston (*Viaggiana*, about 1776), Thomas Martyn (*The Gentleman's Guide in His Tour Through Italy*, 1787), Sir James Edward Smith (*Sketch of a Tour on the Continent*, 1793), Mariana Starke (*Letters from Italy*, 1800), J. G. Lemaistre (*Travels after the Peace of Amiens*, 1806), and John Chetwode Eustace (*A Tour through Italy*, 1813)—continued to judge pictures after the old academic standards, and remained true to the schools of elegance and somber heroics. Matthew Pilkington's *Gentleman's and Connoisseur's Dic-*

*tionary of Painters* (1777) was altogether in the old style of criticism. Sir Joshua himself lent additional credit to it by sponsoring and annotating a new English translation, the fifth, of Dufresnoy's *De Arte Graphica* by William Mason (1783). Now and again, however, a few verses like those in William Hayley's otherwise conventional *Essay on Painting* (1778) show us that Reynolds' dearest passion was being slowly adopted by laymen:

Inflam'd by Genius with sublimest rage,  
By toil unwearied, and unchill'd by age,  
In the fine frenzy of exalted thought,  
Gigantic ANGELO his wonders wrought;  
And high, by native strength of spirit rais'd,  
The mighty HOMER of the pencil blaz'd.

As for Italian scenery, of which I have formerly spoken in connection with art, I really cannot trace the origins of a transcendental attitude toward it to the days before 1770.

#### BARETTI AGAIN: ITALIAN CHARACTER VINDICATED: 1768

The last, though in some ways the most important, element of Italian life to be defended and vindicated in England in these years was Italian character itself. While Italian literature, history, art, and even independence showed signs of taking a tenacious hold on the English literary imagination, Italian character still continued to be torn to shreds in travel books like those of Sacheverell Stevens (*Miscellaneous Remarks Made on the Spot in a Late Seven Years Tour*, 1756) and Johann Georg Keyser, F.R.S. (*Travels through . . . Italy*, translated from the German, 1756-57), and in poems like Goldsmith's *Traveller* (begun in 1755). To make matters worse, the year 1766 saw the appearance of two works which exceeded all that had gone before in pouring vituperation on the Italian heart. Samuel Sharp's *Letters from Italy* and Tobias Smollett's *Travels through France and Italy* represent, in travel literature, the sublime of scurrility. Had they been allowed to stand as impartial representations of Italian temper, the origins of romantic sympathy with Italian character might have been retarded another decade or even a generation. As it was, our old friend, Giuseppe Baretti, felt called upon to come to his slandered countrymen's de-

fense in *An Account of the Manners and Customs of Italy* (1768). This work was intended both as an answer to Sharp and as a guide-book to the real nature of Italians.

Sharp and Smollett were both invalids, subject to more or less chronic depression of spirits, and unequal to the trials of diet and lodging incident to Italian travel in the eighteenth century. Hence the desperate rancor which they brought to their recapitulation of a conception of Italian character that had been current in England at least since the days of Addison. The Italians of the lower classes were, they said, dirty, lazy, and murderous; those of the upper, poor, discourteous, and universally adulterous; while Italians of all classes were ignorantly superstitious and cravenly abject before tyranny. Let me give a few samples of our travellers' temper. Though Baretti answered Sharp, Smollett will serve us better for quotation. Both were supreme examples of the insular *enragé*, but only one took pains to marshal his words as effectively as possible before hurling them at the enemy's head. Of Italian dirtiness Smollett could only sputter: "I will venture to say that a common prisoner in the Marshalsea or King's Bench is more cleanly and commodiously lodged than we were in many places. . . The houses are abominably nasty, and generally destitute of provisions; when eatables were found, we were almost poisoned by their cookery. . ." In collecting "villainously rapacious" sums for their filthy accommodation the Italian peasants displayed their other chief trait: a love of cutting throats. "Happy are those travellers," said Smollett, "who have phlegm enough to disregard their insolence and importunity: for this is not so disagreeable as their revenge is dangerous." The Venetians, said Sharp, "will treacherously stab on the least provocation"; the Neapolitans are "a nation diabolical in their nature. . ."

Italians of the upper classes were called stiff, sour, and boastful—traits for which Sharp and Smollett found a common explanation in their indigence. This jolly pair could find nothing but meanness or meretricious display in Italian gardens, palaces, churches, industries, armies, navies, and fortifications, the last three of which were usually branded, "Lilliputian." But the less grandeur these degenerate heirs of Cæsar had in their lives, the more they insisted

on filling their conversation with pompous expressions and grandiose boasting. The mere sending of a servant they now called an *ambasciata*, said Sharp; a mere gathering of amateur musicians, an *accademia*. Sharp spent weeks ascertaining just what mean subtrefuges Italian noblemen resorted to in the effort to keep up an appearance of affluence. No wonder their conduct, founded on lies, was cold, ceremonious, and sour. But the worst fault was their sexual lust, so flagrantly displayed in the social code of cicisbeism. A sensible Spanish custom which decreed that a married lady should not appear in public without a male escort, either her husband or a relation, had been, when taken up in Italy, perverted by the prurient genius of the people. There it had been made a breach of social etiquette for the husband *ever* to appear in public with his wife, while his shoes could be filled by *any* man. Our English travellers, like so many before them, put the worst possible construction upon the relation of the wife to her cicisbeo. Traditional Italian jealousy, it was evident to them, had gone by the board, while husbands were consoled for the loss of their honor by being allowed to play the cicisbeo to other men's wives. Smollett explained the phenomenon of cicisbeism by supposing that "The Italians, having been accused of jealousy, were resolved to wipe off the reproach, and, seeking to avoid it for the future, have run into the other extreme." He also repeated the flagitious supposition, long favored by English travellers, that "the custom of choosing cicisbei was calculated to prevent the extinction of families, which would otherwise often happen in consequence of marriages founded upon interest, without any mutual affection in the contracting parties." Sharp insisted, of course, that cicisbei were no "innocent kind of dangling fribble," though he was forced to admit that in a city like Florence some enjoyed only mild degrees of turpitude. There "the generality of ladies have each of them three Cicesbeos: the first is the Cicesbeo of dignity; the second is the Cicesbeo who picks up the glove, gives the fan, and pulls off, or puts on, the cloak, &c.; the third Cicesbeo is, by the wags, deemed the substantial Cicesbeo, or Lover."<sup>31</sup> Thus the Italian upper classes were damned with universal sexual immorality.

<sup>31</sup> It is significant of the foundation of these assertions that Sharp here adds: "God knows how these matters go; for, in public, the Ladies behave

Of the vices which Italians, high and low, shared alike, the worst—superstitious submission to immoral priests and cowardly subjection to merciless tyrants—were thought to be closely related. England's boasted freedom was believed to be intimately connected with her final eviction of Catholic monarchs. To patriotic English travellers Catholic religious customs seemed so many "raree-shows" by means of which political tyranny distracted a people's attention from its degradation. To be amused by them was to act the part of the veriest dastard slave. Both Sharp and Smollett were acutely sensitive to the least breath of Catholic superstition. To see affection paid to statues of saints, Christ, or the Virgin made them howl with rage. An eternal butt of their sarcasm was the so-called "negro" madonna at Loretto, supposed to have been carved out of cedar of Lebanon by St. Luke, and to have effected miraculous cures. Most shocking of all was to meet such images being carried in procession through the streets of some fine Italian city, often, as Smollett put it, "preceded and followed by an irregular mob of penitents in sackcloth, with lighted tapers, and monks carrying crucifixes, bawling and bellowing litanies." An image that particularly excited the snarling Scot's disgust was "a figure of the Virgin Mary, as big as the life, standing within a gilt frame, dressed in a gold stuff, with a large hoop, a great quantity of false jewels, her face painted and patched, and her hair frizzled and curled in the very extremity of fashion." To fawn on her was to embrace the chains of a political degradation of the most despicable kind. The Italians were not only vile; they were hopelessly vile.

This in 1766. In 1768 Baretti came to the rescue of his long-slandered countrymen. Imitating Johnson, Baretti was able to write an English style well calculated to set off that combination of benevolence and common sense which represented the height of urbanity in thinking in those days. Through association with Dr. Johnson and his circle, Baretti had his hand on the pulse of English thought and feeling. He knew exactly the line to take to restore his countrymen to favor with thoughtful English readers.

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with so much modesty and decorum that I should be tempted to treat some of these reports as mere calumny, were not the truth of them so notorious. . ."



The time favored a strong admixture of benevolence and sensibility in its favorite characters in both fiction and life. Taking his cue from this fact, and perhaps from the facts of Italian life itself, Baretti proceeded to draw a picture of Latin character that was almost bound to popularize it in England.

To begin with, said he, the lower classes in Italy are not particularly dirty or rapacious—much less so than those of most other nations—while Mr. Sharp's troubles with inns could have been entirely avoided if he had only been a bit less close with his shillings. As to Mr. Sharp's "calumnious position, that our low people are all murderers and assassins," it cannot be maintained on any ground. The truth is that such characters as Englishmen admire in their novels are to be daily encountered in every hamlet and byway of Italy. Compassion for suffering, unfailing good nature, mother love, sighs, tears—all the panoply of a feeling heart—are simply native to the Italians. The words Baretti found for their temper were "humble, courteous, peaceable, cheerful, compassionate, and religious. . ." "Loving and of friendly disposition," Mr. Sharp should have said, had it not been that this malignant traveller "saw little, inquired less, and reflected not at all." The Italians work hard when they can get work to do, and pass their holidays "singing, fiddling, and dancing. . ." Once in a long time their sanguine tempers, especially in matters of jealousy, may lead them to commit murder. But such murders are never coldly contemplated, and are to be considered merely as a defect of a warm-hearted excellence. "The Italians are so tender-hearted that they will shed tears at any mournful story; and when any criminal is executed, you will see the stoutest among them weep most cordially, pray most devoutly, and give what little money they can spare to have masses celebrated for the repose of the poor suffering soul. . ." In a day when the most admired of all virtues was, perhaps, that of sympathy for distress, oppression, and suffering, Baretti claimed that his countrymen were the most "sensible" people in Europe.

The sensibility of the lower classes extended, of course, through the upper. What touching forms it took there could be readily discerned by any unbiassed traveller who cared to observe the

tender consideration with which an Italian gentleman treats his father, his mother, his wife, his child, his friend, his servant, and the beggar in the street. That this gentleman was cold, stiff, or ceremonious, Baretti flatly denied, and retorted upon Sharp what seems to have been the fact—that the latter had had no opportunity of viewing typical Italian households, seldom having been invited to any. Baretti also denied that the upper-class Italian was appreciably poorer than his English compeer. As for the custom of *cicisbeism*, Baretti disposed of that in one of his best turned chapters, entitled "Rise, Progress, and Present State of *Cicisbeism* in Italy."

The Italian custom of almost every man attending on a lady with a lover's attention and respect is of a very old date. A spirit of gallantry, derived from the age of chivalry, much heightened and refined by the revival of the Platonic philosophy in Italy about the thirteenth century, and still much cultivated in our universities, and in our numerous poetical academies, has been so long incorporated in our manners that almost every polite individual . . . is actuated by it in some degree. Witness the celebrated volume of Italian verses by Francis Petrarca, whose amorous and yet most chaste Platonic sentiments for the beautiful Laura have rendered him the favourite poet of Italy for these last four centuries. . .

*Cicisbeism* itself is, really, only another exhibition of Italian sensibility. Almost all Italians, the moment they acquire the ability to read,

learn that the contemplation of earthly beauty raises an honest mind to the contemplation and love of the heavenly. . . . Hence that reverential idea which almost every polite individual in Italy entertains of female beauty; hence that custom, almost universal, of kissing in a most humble manner our ladies' hands when we enter their rooms; . . . and hence the power that every polite woman has amongst us of commanding as many adorers as she lists, who love her with this kind of mystic love, and never disunite the idea of her beauty from that of her virtue.

The term "*cicisbei*," as applied to a lady's adorers, merely characterizes their reverential tone of voice—whisperers—and "never implies the least disparaging reflection either upon them or the

ladies. . ." Baretto said it was conceivable that one or two ignorant, tasteless, or depraved Italians may have turned their time-honored custom to base ends, but added, "[I have] myself been, in my bright days, both a cicisbeo and an humble imitator of Petrarch's poetry. . ."

Having defended his countrymen against the charges of assassination and adultery, Baretto was pretty well content to rest from his labors. Being himself what he facetiously called "an old-fashioned staunch Machiavellian," he did not feel that superstition and monarchy needed much defense. He merely pleaded that Englishmen should not make fun of the devotional practices of hearts well known to be benevolent and tender. The poorer classes already have poverty, disease, and limited talents to contend with, said he, and revolution, whatever it may do for some nations, will probably not do much for the Italians. "Let us therefore suffer the good creatures to live on as they have done these many ages; let them gaze with wonted superstition on their wooden saints and paste-board Madonnas; let them enjoy their festivals and raree-shows; and a fig for these outlandish politics imported in French books. . ." Though no liberal, Baretto had an ideal of a united Italy which he expressed in several of his works. He was one of the first persons to introduce to English attention an idea which came to mean so much to the poets, dramatists, and novelists of a later date. In his *Italian Library* (1757) he had already written of his native Prince of Savoy: "May my expectation not be frustrated of hearing the banks of the Po, the Tiber, the Mincio, the Sebeto, and the Arno, and both the shores of my country, with the Alps and Apennines, loudly re-echo his name, and repeat the Italian verses that shall be sung in his praise." Now, in the *Manners and Customs*, arguing that Italy was not so poor as she seemed, he said of the query, "Why, then, does she make no figure at all either in Europe or elsewhere?"—"To this question I cannot give any answer until I see all Italy, or even the greater part of it, under a single government, either free or slavish, no matter which. . ."

Baretto might have made a more telling defense of Catholic superstition if he had taken a line discovered some years before by

Dr. John Shebbeare in his satirical *Letters on the English Nation: by Batista [sic] Angeloni, a Jesuit, Who Resided Many Years in London* (1755). This work deserves to be mentioned as perhaps the very earliest example of a defense of Italian character to appear in the eighteenth century. But it was not seriously advanced and, therefore, not seriously taken. In this work Shebbeare thought to satirize the English Whigs by making them out worse villains than the people they may have been supposed to despise the most: slavish-souled Italians. Having committed himself to this satirical procedure, Shebbeare sometimes lashed himself into an eloquent defense of Angeloni's country. In support of his charge that "Every Englishman's notion of happiness is included in riches," he cited the English travellers in Italy. "When they speak of the deserted towns of Italy, they talk of their inhabitants as the most miserable of all people because they are not rich; trade, commerce, and bustle are their inseparable and eternal notions of felicity. . ." Englishmen cannot conceive "that the mind of man may draw consolation and ecstatic joy from other objects" than shining guineas.

When these people, in their travels, see a poor Italian pouring forth the warm devotion of his soul before the image of his patron saint, they conclude him a fool, or a deluded bigot, because he can draw no advantage from this image, which is inanimate and void of power; they laugh at this as idolatry, not once conceiving that the rapture which fills the soul of this devotee is as real and effectual joy to him . . . as if the image was impowered with all the acts of creation. . .

It was along just this line, more or less facetiously developed by Shebbeare, that the actual rehabilitation of Italian saint- and relic-worship was soon to take place, as we shall see.

Thus were Smollett and Sharp refuted by Baretti, and England introduced to such a revised conception of Italian character as could hardly help becoming popular with a "feeling" people. Sterne had thought to help forward the good work, perhaps, by balancing *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768) against Smellfungus's so-called realistic one. But the parson died before he was able to carry the story of his forays of "Love or

Pity" beyond the Alps. To Baretti belongs the credit of revising the British theory of Italian character in a direction which we may now, looking back, call romantic. Nor did the fact that he murdered a bully in the Haymarket in 1769 damage the favorable impression made by the *Manners and Customs*. Burke, Garrick, Johnson, Reynolds, and Goldsmith all appeared to testify to the extraordinary excellence of Baretti's moral character. For the learning displayed in his books he was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. From 1782 until the end of his life in 1789 he received a small pension from the government of the country which he had adopted, apparently for the sake of persuading it to adopt his own.

JAMES BOSWELL AND THE FRIENDS OF CORSICA: ITALIAN  
INDEPENDENCE ADVOCATED: 1768-1773

Let Baretti be as cynical and unromantic as he wished about the Italians' need of or capacity for liberty, English well-wishers of his people were sure that sensitive southern hearts would want republican freedom as well as the unity which he himself so passionately desired for them. In the 1760's the peninsula seemed to lie crushed under Bourbon monarchs and Austrian archdukes and viceroys. Nevertheless Venice, though a far cry from true democracy, suggested, with her happy-faced gondoliers, how liberty was adored by the feeling populace of Italy; while that ardent island, little Corsica, proved, with its eternal revolutions against Genoa, that Italians could adore liberty more than life. Before the 1760's Englishmen seem usually to have frowned on the democratic aspirations of the Corsicans. To the anonymous "Lady of Quality" who in 1732 wrote a play on their uprisings (*The Fate of Corsica*), the island had seemed a "Mock-state," "Hell in Epitome," "the Scorn and Jest of all Nations." But now, with the maturing in England of sentimental liberalism, with the successful revolt of Corsica (1752), with its experiments in republican government under Pasquale Paoli (1755-68), and with its cession (1768) and final submission (1770) to France, the liberty-loving Corsicans won the sympathy they deserved. The same year which brought Baretti's *Account of the Manners and Customs of Italy* to light

saw also James Boswell's *Account of Corsica*. Taken together, these books furnish as complete a foretaste of the romantic attitude toward the Italians as the most ardent enthusiast for origins can wish for.

Corsica's earnest experiments in democratic government, preceding America's in point of time, attracted world-wide attention. Rousseau himself planned a republican government for the island, while an Englishwoman, Catherine Macaulay, published "A Short Sketch of a Democratical Form of Government, in a Letter to Signor Paoli" (1767).<sup>32</sup> At least two young Britons posted off to Corsica to taste the experiment at first hand. These were James Boswell and Andrew Burnaby, who later became Archdeacon of Leicester. Both were aflame with ideas of the ancient Roman Republic come again; they even grew scornful of the limited English franchise and questioned the great political and poetic dogma of English freedom. Of General Paoli's government Boswell wrote, "I look upon it as the best that hath ever existed in the democratical form." Burnaby, whose *Journal of a Tour in Corsica in the Year 1766* was not published till 1804, said that, for true republican humility and a democratic benevolence which elevates him above all sense of class distinction, Pasquale Paoli "stands alone an example to the age he lives in, and not inferior to the patriots and heroes of antiquity." Even before the appearance of Boswell's *Account of Corsica* in 1768, a fervid poem in praise of this valiant patriot had appeared. The anonymous author of *Pride, a Poem, Inscribed to John Wilkes, Esquire* (1766) called attention to the amazing fact that

In this vile age, no virtue now rever'd,  
No godlike patriot prodigy appear'd  
'Til one small spot (for in th' ALMIGHTY'S Book  
The smallest spot is never overlook'd)  
Held forth the wonder to all Europe's shame,  
Produc'd the man, and PAOLI his name.  
Go on, immortal man! the path pursue  
Mark'd out by heav'n, and destin'd but for you;

<sup>32</sup> In *Loose Remarks on Certain Positions To Be Found in Mr. Hobbes's Philosophical Rudiments of Government and Society*.

Fix firm your hope on this, on this your trust,  
Your arms must conquer as your cause is just.  
By heav'n! it makes my life's best blood run cold,  
Then glow to madness, when thy story's told. . .

But it was Corsica's falling into the powerful and probably ineluctable paws of France in 1768 that made the British realize to the full what a prodigy of republican sensibility had just been murdered. The Corsicans, with Paoli at their head, became greater heroes in proportion as they became surer martyrs. It was discovered that these people, long called the "Dæmons of Italy," were in reality "naturally gentle and good-natured." Boswell, Burnaby, Smollett himself (if he wrote "Italy and the Italian Islands" in *The Present State of All Nations*, 1769), and the "several hands" who composed the *British Essays in Favour of the Brave Corsicans* (1769) asserted that their eyes sparkled with humane sentiments. Their quick tempers and time-honored revenges are merely the result, said Boswell, of centuries of oppression and misrule, when the only way for a man to get justice was to go and execute it himself. In their lives they are cheerful, eloquent, temperate, and chaste. Boswell could not understand how enlightened nations could league together to oppress this valiant people. The love of liberty is axiomatic in every feeling heart: "Liberty is so natural, and so dear to mankind . . . that it is indispensably necessary to our happiness. Everything ariseth from it." He reproached the British government for having refused to trade with Corsica in the days of her independence—"Surely it would be worthy of a people, whom the felicity of freedom has rendered generous, to afford their countenance to a race of heroes, who have done so much to secure to themselves the same blessings." This is perhaps the first of literally hundreds of similar complaints with which British poets and writers were to load their government during the next hundred years, as the Italians fought slowly on toward unity and independence.

The excitement of British humanitarians spilled over in such a quantity of poetry and prose that the bruit of it led Paoli to seek refuge and assistance for his lost cause among them. In England he shook the hand of Dr. Johnson; was elected to The Club;

granted a pension of £1,200 a year; and honored, according to the author of *A Review of the Conduct of Pascal Paoli* (1770), with the "esteem and respect of all sensible and upright men." Professor Chauncey Tinker, in one of the essays in his delightful book, *Nature's Simple Plan* (1922), has quoted many of the fervid verses written in his honor, to which I cannot help adding a few. I pass over the anonymous "Fall of Corsica: a Poem" (in *The Blessings of Liberty*, 1769) and *Corsica, a Poetical Address* (1769) to quote from Robert Colvill's *Cyrnaean Hero* (1772):

Hail to the Chief! whom civic wreaths adorn,  
Whose loud acclaim from pole to pole is borne;  
Whose godlike strife to save a sinking land,  
To wrench the scourge from stern oppression's hand, . . .  
The British youth shall mark with fond surprise,  
And patriots feel their kindred passions rise. . .

Meanwhile, exil'd from all the great can boast,  
From friends, from kindred, from your native coast,  
Honour'd and safe, by Thames fam'd stream repose,  
Nor dread the guile of Cyrna's vengeful foes. . . .  
The circling seas a shining bulwark stand  
To shield the patriot 'scap'd from Pharaoh's hand.

Mrs. Barbauld's *Poems* (1773) commended "Generous BOSWELL" for turning his tout from "the grey relics of imperial Rome" to "animated forms of patriot zeal." Of the Corsicans she wrote:

And are there yet, in this late sickly age, . . .  
Such bold exalted spirits? Men whose deeds,  
To the bright annals of old GREECE oppos'd,  
Would throw in shades her yet unrival'd name . . . ?

The heroes of Corte will all be placed by poets among the stars,  
but of Corsican cognomens,

Thine, PAOLI, with sweetest sound shall dwell  
On their applauding lips; thy sacred name,  
Endear'd to long posterity, some muse,  
More worthy of the theme, shall consecrate  
To after ages, and applauding worlds  
Shall bless the godlike man who sav'd his country.



It would give me the greatest pleasure to be able at this point to analyse a play called *The Conquest of Corsica by the French, a Tragedy, by a Lady* (1771). Of this production, surely pertinent to our subject, I have not been able to come across a copy. Paoli himself may have been the protagonist of the action. We may believe, I think, that the mere "Lady" of 1771 made ample amends for the unspeakably anti-Corsican "Lady of Quality" of 1732.

Thus the decade from 1760 to 1770, beginning with Hervey and ending with Boswell, saw the origins of a phenomenon which was to characterize English literature for a hundred years: that of British travellers, poets, and playwrights espousing the cause of Italian republican independence.

And so we have come to the end of what is, in effect, the most important part of the study to which we have set our shoulder. For to isolate what seem to have been the very origins of the romantic interest in Italian literature, history, painting, character, and independence was the most delicate part of our problems. What is left for us now—to watch these frail roots grow tough and woody and strong with promise of the splendid tree to come—is a comparatively simple, straightforward matter. It is, of course, with some diffidence that I propose the names of Baretti, Cork, Huggins, Hervey, Doyne, Hurd, Hoole, Reynolds, and Boswell as the founders of the English romantic attitude toward Italy. Important names may have escaped me. These precursors may also have had precursors of their own whom I have not had the good fortune to come across. It must be clear to my reader that I have pulled certain of my heroes—notably Cork, Hervey, and Reynolds—out of a rather slim sleeve. It is also highly probable that certain factors too intangible to trace—including the then practically obliterated fear of popish Pretenders and an increasingly favorable balance of trade with Italy—contributed to break down cultural barriers. For our purposes it is sufficient if we have established the point that the British impercipient of more than half a century was significantly challenged in the days we have been studying. In these times an old school of thought—we may call it patriotic rationalism—began to surrender to a new—that of humanitarian sensi-

bility. Such changes are usually thought to take place with momentous slowness, by imperceptible gradations. But on us the available evidence seems, once or twice, to have played odd tricks. Doubtless the way was more fully prepared than I have been able to make out. But time has obliterated the footprints. Time is a god, and may, if he chooses, act the rôle of a god-from-the-machine. He makes it possible for us to see history steadily by making it impossible to see it whole.



### III

THE TIDE TURNS: 1770-1785



### PART III

#### THE TIDE TURNS: 1770-1785

Though what we have called the anti-Italian tide had been pretty thoroughly stemmed by 1770, as we have seen, it cannot be said that all of the Britons studied felt free to give themselves up whole-heartedly to Italian things, whether to affection for the Italians' character, support of *their* independence, or enjoyment of their literature, history, art, or scenery. In the first place, they did not know enough about these to appreciate them thoroughly. In the second, they were so close to the old anti-Italian movement of the first half of the eighteenth century that they could hardly help being shaken by its reverberations. Thus they often found themselves torn between a half-realized love of things Italian and a feeling that such love must be tasteless, unmanly, and even sinful. Such I take to be the explanation of the eccentric conduct of old Huet, immortalized in *Humphry Clinker* (1771), who may have been rather typical of the travelling Englishman of the 1760's. In Italy Huet was known "by the nickname of *Cavallo Bianco* from his appearing always mounted upon a pale horse, like Death in the Revelations." Never, though he could hardly bear to leave his fascinating Italians for a minute, did Huet allow himself to "deviate one tittle" from the dress, diet, and customs in which he had been brought up! Never did he allow himself to settle down in his beloved Naples, which he used only as the headquarters for a *giro*, performed over and over, which included Marseilles, Genoa, Lerici, Pisa, Florence, and Rome. Once back at Naples, he immediately embarked on the next boat for Marseilles, and began again. There is only one record of his ever having varied this procedure in his whole latter life. That was when, "after having twelve times described this circle, he . . . flew off at a tangent to visit some trees at his country-house in England, which he had planted above twenty years ago, after the plan of the double colonnade in the piazza of St. Peter's at Rome." It will be the

province of this part of our chronicle to trace some of the steps by which such painfully diffident love of Italy swelled into confidence in the years between 1770 and 1785. Most of the material—it now came pouring in from all sides—is rather fragmentary and diffusive in nature, and can be fitted into our chronological scheme only with some difficulty.

WILLIAM ROBERTSON AND THOMAS NUGENT: MORE LIGHT  
ON ITALIAN HISTORY: 1769-1771

The Reverend William Robertson's *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V* (1769), which enjoyed a wide popularity in the 1770's and later, introduced English readers to a number of dramatic scenes from Italian history, and combined with Cork's *Letters from Italy* (published, 1773) to stimulate interest in that subject. To Cork's "domestic tragedies" Robertson added studies of the "falls" of several Italian princes and supermen. He also praised the noble patriotism and disinterested love of liberty which induced Andrea Doria to rescue Genoa from France in 1528; and dropped a tear over the last stand of those daring republicans who defended the ancient liberties of Florence in 1530. His sorrow at this latter event did not, however, go deep enough to make him wish to call English attention to the tragic bravery of Francesco Ferrucci, the citizen captain. He gave, in addition, a vigorous description of the battle of Pavia (1525), which, though fought between France and the Empire, is one of the more balefully glamorous incidents of Italian history. Readers of Robertson were not likely to forget his description of the field on which the chivalry of France, headed by Francis I himself, was completely smashed by the brilliant Marquis of Pescara—"Never did armies engage with greater ardour. . ." At the end of the fight Bonnavet lay dead; Francis, sorely wounded, was a prisoner. "Ten thousand men fell on this day, one of the most fatal France had ever seen. Among these were many noblemen of the highest distinction, who chose rather to perish than to turn their backs with dishonour." Popularized by Robertson, this battle, which had furnished a background for Massinger's *Duke of Millaine*, soon found its way back into English imaginative literature, as we shall see.

Of "the falls of princes" described by Robertson we may men-

tion those of Lodovico Sforza (1500), Clement VII (1527), Alessandro de' Medici (1537), and Giovanni Luigi de' Fieschi (1547). The story of how Sforza usurped the Duchy of Milan by nepoticide and betrayed Italy to France, only to be rewarded with death in a French dungeon, had, you remember, inspired a Jacobean tragedy. Robertson told it only in passing, however, and failed to trick it out in colors calculated to catch the imagination of a contemporary dramatist. By the terrible calamity which Clement VII, with his shifty politics, brought upon himself and his country in 1527 Robertson did much better. With some vigor he described the plight of the pope and the death of the impious yet daring Constable de Bourbon when, at the very beginning of the siege of Rome, "a musket bullet from the rampart pierced his groin with a wound, which he immediately felt to be mortal. . ." Bourbon quickly ordered those near him to cover his body with a cloak in order to keep his soldiers from being disheartened. His death, as a matter of fact, nerved them to a terrible revenge, in which "Churches, palaces, and the houses of private persons were plundered without distinction. No age, or character, or sex was exempt from injury. Cardinals, nobles, priests, matrons, virgins, were all prey of soldiers, and at the mercy of men deaf to the voice of humanity." It was probably upon Robertson that Byron drew when he came to conceive, years later, his *Deformed Transformed*. Robertson also made the most of the murder of Alessandro, the first Duke of Florence, "who neglected entirely the cares of government, and abandoned himself to the most dissolute debauchery." The most interesting figure in this story, on which Shirley had founded his *Traitor*, was the murderer, Lorenzino, the duke's cousin. Whether he was prompted to this deed "by the love of liberty, or allured by the hope of attaining the supreme power," Robertson was not prepared to decide. Certain it was that Lorenzino insinuated himself into the duke's good graces—"employing all the powers of a cultivated and inventive genius" to add "elegance as well as variety to vice"—for the express purpose of killing him.

But no sooner was the deed done than, standing astonished, and struck with horror at its atrocity, he forgot, in a moment, all the motives which had induced him to commit it. Instead of rousing



the people to recover their liberty by publishing the death of the tyrant, instead of taking any step towards opening his own way to the dignity now vacant, he, . . . like a man bereaved of reason and presence of mind, fled with the utmost precipitation out of the Florentine territories.

Here was a beautiful psychological problem for another Shirley to try his hand on.

The tragedy of which Robertson made the most was that of Fieschi, or Fiesco, of Genoa. He had, of course, inspiring precedents in the narratives of Mascardi and the Cardinal de Retz. Fiesco's attempt to usurp the government of Genoa was, he said, "one of the boldest actions recorded in history." As far as possible he enlisted the reader's sympathy in Fiesco's cause with stories of the wickedness of Giannettino Doria, into whose tyrannous hands the aged Andrea was about to deliver the government, and descriptions of Fiesco's personal fascination. "He was graceful and majestic in his person; magnificent even to profusion; of a generosity that anticipated the wishes of his friends, and exceeded the expectations of strangers; of an insinuating address, gentle manners, and a flowing affability." Under these charms he concealed "an insatiable and restless ambition, a courage unacquainted with fear, and a mind that disdained subordination." Though it was Fiesco himself who first conceived the design of expelling the Dorias from the government, it was Vertina, "a man of desperate fortune, capable alike of devising and executing the most audacious deeds," who persuaded him to usurp the government for himself. This plan once formed, Fiesco, though he "seemed to be abandoned entirely to pleasure and dissipation," spread nets so powerful that there was hardly a chance for his enemies to escape. When all was ready, he invited many of the leading families of the city to his palace, where he called upon them in a moving speech "to join in a deed of valour, which would lead them to liberty and immortal renown." To his worried wife—"whom he loved with tender affection, and whose beauty and virtue rendered her worthy of his love"—he cried in farewell, " '[Y]ou shall either never see me more, or you shall behold to-morrow everything in Genoa subject to your power.' " Ironically, though his patisans quickly killed Giannettino Doria and got full possession of the city, he never saw her

more. An accident, as he was boarding one of the ships in the harbor, put an ignominious end to his carefully laid plans. "Being loaded with heavy armour, he sunk to the bottom, and perished in the very moment when he might have taken full possession of everything that his ambitious heart could desire." So far as I know, Fiesco's story, though full of drama, had never, probably by reason of its mechanical catastrophe, found a dramatist. But Robertson's account, even if not in England, was to find one for it soon.

Additional light, of a very intimate nature, was thrown upon some of Robertson's stories by the publication in 1771 of Thomas Nugent's translation of Benvenuto Cellini's autobiography. This remarkable *Vita*, in this its first English dress, undoubtedly did a great deal to put Englishmen on terms of some intimacy with several famous artists of the Renaissance, including Michelangelo, Romano, and Titian. Here I have time only to point out how it was calculated to vivify Robertson's account of the calamities of Clement VII and his putative bastard, Duke Alessandro. If we are to believe Benvenuto's story, it was he himself who fired the shot which laid the Constable de Bourbon dead beneath the walls of Rome—"having taken aim with my piece where I saw the thickest crowd of the enemy, I fixed my eye on a person who seemed to be lifted up by the rest. . ." It is hardly necessary for me to labor the point that Cellini's joyous narrative, true or not, must have made Italian history come alive. His side light on the murder of Alessandro was even more colorful. Some months before his end, the duke had commissioned Benvenuto, Lorenzino being by, to cast a medal of him. Said Cellini:

"My lord, you shall have reason to be satisfied, for I will make you a much finer medal than that of pope Clement . . . and Signor Lorenzo, being a person of learning and genius, will furnish me with a device for a fine reverse." Lorenzo instantly replied, "That is the very thing I was just thinking of, to give you the hint of a reverse worthy of his excellency. . . . I will think of it as soon as I possibly can; my intention is to produce something to surprise the world."

These glimpses into Italian history were not piercing. They seem, however, to have been provocative.

LADY MILLER AND A KNOT OF TRAVELLERS: ENGLISHMEN  
TAKE UP THE DEFENSE OF ITALIAN CHARACTER  
1770-1773

In the years between 1770 and 1773 at least half a dozen English travellers were in Italy recording their impressions of Italian character, literature, art, and landscape. They included Lady Miller, Dr. John Armstrong, Charles Burney, Patrick Brydone, Sir William Young, and the anonymous author of *Travels into France and Italy* (1771). Of these travellers' feelings for Italian art and literature we may dispose in a word. Their opinions of Italian character and scenery need to be explained more at length: the first, as showing the effect of Baretti's brilliant defense of the manners and customs of his country; the second, as throwing light on the origins of the romantic interpretation of Italian scenery. The changed attitude toward Italian character I will discuss briefly in this section; toward nature, in the next.

As for our travellers' feelings for Italian literature, they were, when expressed, respectful and sympathetic. As representative we may cite the opinion of the anonymous writer of 1771 where he says, "The Italians have not a great number nor variety of authors, but they have some most excellent: Dante,<sup>1</sup> Tasso, and Ariosto. The French cannot pretend to a comparison in heroic poetry. We have Spenser for Ariosto; and Milton surpasses Tasso; Dante I understand enough highly to admire, but perhaps not to do justice by a decision." The travellers most interested in painting were Dr. Armstrong and Lady Miller, whose *Letters from Italy . . . in the Years MDCCLXX and MDCCLXXI* (1776) was perhaps the most complete guide to the Italian picture galleries which had yet appeared in England. Armstrong, who published his *Short Ramble through Some Parts of France and Italy* (1771) under the pseudonym of "Launcelot Temple," found the Sistine Chapel—which we may safely take as a touchstone of any given traveller's romanticism—"a prodigious display of sublime, melancholy, and dreadful Imagination." In a spirit which he may have caught from Reynolds he dwelt on the "expressions of solemn Meditation and divine Enthusiasm" observable in the faces of the prophets and

<sup>1</sup> Not in Toynbee.

sybils—far “above the common Standard of human nature.” That he could find a single defect, the ass-eared Charon, in this “magnificently terrible” chapel led him to reflect that there is “no Perfection in human nature. . .”! While not so sympathetic with the chapel itself as Armstrong, Lady Miller found divine lights in some of Michelangelo’s lesser works. Usually conventional and academic in her art criticism, Lady Miller nevertheless dared to take the Frenchmen, Lalande and Cochin himself, to task for overlooking Reynolds’ hero. Of a “Pietà” in bas-relief by Michelangelo, come across accidentally in Genoa, she exclaimed: “It is scarce credible that a mere mortal should arrive at such a height of perfection in this art without the aid of some superior order of beings. . . . And where were thy eyes, O deceived Lalande!” It is indicative of the changing attitude toward Italian painting that an English artist, Thomas Patch, should have been discovering forceful beauties in the Pre-Raphaelites at this same time. From the frescoes of Masaccio, Fra Bartolommeo, and Giotto he engraved sixty-two folio plates, which he published in Florence with short lives of the painters between 1770 and 1772.

As for Italian character, most of our travellers were torn between the conventional accusations of Sharp and the generous vindication of Baretti. It is significant that, after voicing a few platitudes about Latin murder and fornication, they swung, almost without exception, to Baretti’s side. Though he found certain Italians given to playing the “cavaliere sirvente,” our anonymous visitor of 1771 could “see nothing in the disposition of the people to render murder more frequent than in other nations. . .” Dr. Armstrong said, with irony supposed to cut in Sharp’s direction, that, after only two months’ residence among the Italians, he had become a perfect expert on their national character: amongst them he found, oddly enough, three great classes, “the good, the bad, and the indifferent. Each of which I shall exhibit to your view some other time—if I don’t forget. At present I shall only observe that there are many good, more bad, and a great majority of indifferents.” As for Burney, he noted in his *Present State of Music in France and Italy; or, The Journal of a Tour through Those Countries, Undertaken to Collect Materials for a General History*

of *Music* (1771) that Italians are often good and generous to a degree. We must remember, of course, that the translator of Dante went armed with introductions from Baretti. Typical of the Italians he met were the "two Signor Bezozzis," elderly brothers who "ever lived together in the utmost harmony and affection, carrying their similarity of taste to their very dress, which is the same in every particular, even to buttons and buckles." These were celebrated for their remarkable duets, in which one played the hautboy, the other the bassoon. And how they played—"So much expression! such delicacy! such a perfect acquiescence and agreement together that many of the passages seem heart-felt sighs, breathed through the same reed." It was hardly necessary for Burney to add that these gentlemen were, like most Italians with whom he became acquainted, "sober, regular persons," whose greatest self-indulgence was the possession of a painting by "Lodovico Carrach, superior to every picture I have seen by that master."

But it was Lady Miller who made the most well-rounded defense of Italian character in these days. Though capable of conventional cuts at Italians, Lady Miller possessed in embryo several romantic traits. She was genuinely fond of spooks and foreigners. She enjoyed being scared to death in the Roman catacombs, and found in the Italians a preponderance of the virtues described by Baretti. Lady Miller is best known for certain fortnightly meetings of persons of "wit and fashion" in her house at Batheaston. There each guest deposited verses in an antique vase, brought from Italy, which stood on an altar decorated with laurel; while the hostess herself crowned the winning poet with wreaths of myrtle. Among those who frequented her poetical soirées were Miss Seward, Mason, Lord Palmerston, and Garrick. Their lucubrations, collected as *Poetical Amusements at a Villa near Bath* (1775-81), contain several slight references to things Italian, on which we may assume Lady Miller to have been in the habit of holding forth on these witty occasions.

With Baretti Lady Miller agreed that the lower classes in Italy are neither so lazy, dirty, nor murderous as they have been made out; that the upper are neither so stiff, penurious, nor lecherous. At Scaricalasino, near Pietra Mala in the wildest part of the Apennines, she and her party were put up one night at a monastery

whose "cleanliness . . . was quite quakerly." While Lady Miller was fully prepared to admit that plenty of murders may have been committed by the Genoese, she assured English readers that they had lately given up that pastime—"may this humanity have a long continuance!" The churches, as places of sanctuary for criminals, have been, she said, almost everywhere abolished. Of the vile lazzaroni of Naples she had only the pleasantest report to make. "Being a very extraordinary people, I assure you, they govern themselves by a point of honour, which is strictly observed;—may be safely confided in to carry money and valuable goods;—never betray a trust;—rigidly perform their promise;—protect, to the loss of their lives, whoever flies to them for shelter. . ." Of the ceremoniousness of the upper classes she could not find a trace. It was not in Italy that she experienced that "species of captivity" into which the hosts of most nations throw their guests "by a politeness *mal-entendue*. . ." Italians are masters of that "perfection of good-breeding" which consists in putting everyone at his ease. As for the wantonness of Italian women and the adultery concealed by the custom of *cicisbeism*, Lady Miller was not prepared to deny their existence. But she saw plenty of extenuating circumstances. Consider the tyranny of Italian parents and the kind of education a young lady receives in her convent school—"she is scarcely blamable for any gallant incident she may be involved in by artful men and bad examples." As for the *cavalieri serventi*, they, though perhaps not so good as Mr. Baretti would have us suppose, are not so bad as they are made out. *Cicisbeism* "would appear in a proper light, and take off a great deal of the odium thrown upon the Italians, if the *Cavalieri Serventi* were called husbands; for the real husband, or beloved friend, of a Venetian lady (often for life) is the *Cicisbeo*." He is the natural result of a social system which makes it impossible for a young woman to choose her own husband—"this surely lessens the criminality, at least in some degree." "Sincerity, frankness, and honourability are not confined to any country." One might almost suppose them, from Lady Miller's account, to flourish particularly in Italy.

There was, to be sure, one side of Latin character which Lady Miller did not try to set in a corrective or mollifying light: the love

of religious "superstition," especially of hagiolatry. Patrick Brydone, F.R.S., whose *Tour through Sicily and Malta* (1773) was based on a trip taken in 1770, defended even this despised trait. It seemed to Brydone that the insular Sicilians must be less depraved than the ill-famed Italians of the peninsula. Though he found traces of ciccisbeism amongst them, he also saw "a great deal of domestic happiness: husbands and wives that truly love one another, and whose mutual care and pleasure is the education of their children." A scientist, Brydone was nevertheless prepared to admit that the heart, especially among virtuous southerners, possesses a logic of its own. He was glad to see "the glow of gratitude and affection" in the faces of simple Sicilians who got from images a sense of the "immediate presence and protection of their beloved patrons."

I am persuaded that the warmth of the enthusiastic devotion they often feel before their favourite saints, particularly their female ones, must have something extremely delightful in it; resembling, perhaps, the pure and delicate sensations of the most respectful love. I own I have sometimes envied them in their feelings; and in my heart cursed the pride of reason and philosophy, with all its cool and tasteless triumphs, that lulls into a kind of stoical apathy these most exquisite sensations of the soul. Who would not choose to be deceived when the deception raises in him these delicious passions, that are so worthy of the human heart; and for which, of all others, it seems to be the most fitted?

Should that be called superstition which nourishes in us such a "delicate tone of sensibility" as puts us in tune with the single note of essential humanity running through all manifestations of the creation, high and low? This defense of Italian superstition is, Shebbeare excepted, the first thing of its kind I have come across in the writers of this period. It is only to be expected that an Englishman who sympathized so deeply with Italian sensibility should have desired political freedom for its possessors. As a matter of fact, Brydone could never curse deeply enough that Spanish tyranny<sup>2</sup> which was able "to render poor and wretched

<sup>2</sup> Brydone referred to the rule of the Bourbons in the Two Sicilies; not, of course, to actual Spanish domination.

a country which produces almost spontaneously everything that even luxury can desire." Instead of boasting that the sun never sets on her dominions, Spain "ought rather to be ashamed that ever the sun should see them at all. The sight of these poor people has filled me with indignation."

Thus far had English travellers revised their opinion of Baretti's countrymen only two or three years after the publication of his famous *Manners and Customs*. To just what extent this book was responsible for the change I do not know; but its influence was undoubtedly great.

PATRICK BRYDONE, SIR WILLIAM YOUNG, AND OTHERS: ITALIAN  
LANDSCAPE FINDS WORSHIPPERS: 1770-1773

Certain English travellers of the past, beginning apparently in the late seventeenth century, had rather enjoyed the "horrors" of traversing Alp and Apennine. What they liked was the goose flesh of a thrill comparable to that enjoyed on a switchback railway. The experience was breath-taking in a physical rather than a spiritual sense. I am not prepared at this time to discuss just when, and by whom, this adventure was first made to yield spiritual increment. Perhaps it was by Dennis, or Gray, or half a dozen other forerunners of romanticism. It was not until the days we are discussing, however, that travellers in numbers began to linger awe-struck in the presence of Italy's brilliant waterfalls, precipitous crags, and desolate mountain strongholds. It was not until these days that their appreciation began to take on something of that transcendental tone which was to be carried to its highest pitch by, perhaps, Shelley. This we may say, I think, in our search for origins: that one of the first travellers to screw his sense of reverence for Italian scenery to a high note was the same man who defended Italian saint-worship so warmly—Patrick Brydone. For his experiments in electricity and the scientific interests displayed in his *Tour through Sicily*, Brydone was made a Fellow of the Royal Societies of London and Edinburgh and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. Nothing else seems to be known of him.

Before coming to Brydone, however, we may glance at the na-



ture appreciation of contemporary travellers. Nearly all of these, including Armstrong, Burney, and Lady Miller, could be relied on to enjoy those conventionally admired beauties: the fertile plains of Lombardy, the picturesque bays of Genoa and Naples, and the lazuline sky, so different from England's. Of late years, too, it had become almost conventional to praise the striking cascades at Tivoli and Terni. Lady Miller described both these waterfalls with enthusiasm, the first from her own, the second from her hardy husband's, observations. She was amazed by both the *cascata grande* and the *cascatella* at Tivoli. Of the former she wrote: "The dashing of this torrent is re-echoed back from the inmost recesses of the shades of Tivoli, and the spray of the water so fills the air as to produce a very broad and beautiful rainbow, composed of a greater variety and of more glowing tints than that of the Heavens." The *cascatella*, she recorded,

is composed of one great sheet and three lesser falls, which at length tumble down amongst rocks, and, by the force of their fall and the resistance they meet, are thrown up with such violence as to form new cascades. Amongst the rocks grow trees in the most fantastic shapes. The spray causes rainbows as in the great cascades, and the whole landscape forms the most romantic and picturesque view imaginable. The rude brawling of the water, dashing from rock to rock, is finely contrasted by the stillness that reigns in the adjacent pastures, covered with sheep, feeding and reposing in the utmost tranquility.

Lady Miller's husband, for his part, preferred the falls at Terni—"there cannot be any cascade in the world more extraordinary and more romantically beautiful than this." Such English fondness for the Italian picturesque owed much, suggests Miss Manwaring,<sup>8</sup> to the contemporary fame of painters like Lorrain, Poussin, and Rosa. In the first book of his *English Garden* (1772) Mason urged northern landscape gardeners to try to duplicate some of the wilder effects of Italian scenery. These, "on Memory's tablet drawn," he urged English travellers to

Bring back to Britain; there give local form  
To each Idea, and, if Nature lend

<sup>8</sup> *Italian Landscape in Eighteenth Century England* (1925).

Materials fit of torrent, rock, and shade,  
Produce new TIVOLIS.

In 1772 the love of the Italian picturesque, among other things, led William Young, who later inherited his father's baronetcy and was made Governor of Tobago (1807), to explore a part of Italy "visited by few and described by none." His *Journal of a Summer's Excursion* (published about 1773) details the novel sights of Terra di Bari, Terra di Lecce, the Calabrias, and Sicily. Perhaps he was attracted to this seismic region by the reputation of Salvatore Rosa. These were the wild, often desolate, always forbidding, but weirdly majestic haunts of Salvatore's bands of tiny gypsies, bandits, or soldiers. Though Young's opinion of the people of these regions is dishearteningly low, his enthusiasm for their landscape is all one can wish. Among the Apennines near Sibari Rovinata he found several "most beautifully romantic Villages, which, fixed on rude Rocks half way down the Declivity of the Mountain, were there dashed by Torrents rushing from the Summit, skirted by Woodlings of Myrtle and Mountain Firr, adorned in short with all the ruder Beauties of wild majestic Nature. . ." Amentea he was struck with as "a small Town situated on a vast Rock, forming a tremendous Precipice to the Beach, and split to the North by the Channel of a River. . ." In Sicily, which he thought he had, so to speak, "discovered," he was lifted out of himself by the rugged mountains which, dashed, as it were, from Etna, broke in tumultuous waves all over the island. He was especially impressed with the sight of Etna as caught from the ancient theatre of Taormina, to whose stage it had once, "Thundering forth Ruin," made a superb background. "No one," said Young, "who hath not visited these Parts, can have an Idea of how great, how sublime, an Object the great Ætna is, viewed from these Mountains; many of them there are, high, bold, and rugged; here, there, up, down, Nature seems stark mad; but so superiorly striking is the vast *Gibellò* that the wild Country round seems comparatively tame."

Young was not, however, the discoverer of the sublimity of Sicilian scenery. That honor belongs to Patrick Brydone, both because he was on the spot earlier and because his sense of the

sublime went deeper than Young's. By the unexpected strength and grandeur of Sicilian scenery Brydone was time after time seduced into descriptive raptures which, taken together, helped to create the romantic attitude toward Italian landscape, and furnished Mrs. Radcliffe and her imitators with scenes for dozens of novels and chapbooks. It was Etna, however, that concentrated his attention. This mountain he scaled, right to its summit, one May morning in time to see the sun rise—"the most wonderful and sublime sight in nature."

But here description must ever fall short; for no imagination has dared to form an idea of so glorious and magnificent a scene. Neither is there on the surface of the globe any one point that unites so many awful and sublime objects. . . .

The whole atmosphere by degrees kindled up, and shewed dimly and faintly the boundless prospect around. Both sea and land looked dark and confused, as if only emerging from their original chaos, and light and darkness seemed still undivided till the morning, by degrees advancing, completed the separation. The stars are extinguished, and the shades disappear. The forests, which but now seemed black and bottomless gulphs, . . . appear a new creation rising to the sight, catching life and beauty from every increasing beam. The scene still enlarges, and the horizon seems to widen and expand itself on all sides till the sun, like the great Creator, appears in the east, and with his plastic ray completes the mighty scene.—All appears enchantment; and it is with difficulty we can believe we are still on earth.

In passages like these Brydone not only tells us of, but makes us believe in, the sublimity of Italian scenery. He is perhaps the first of all travellers to give us definite hints and premonitions of that romantic attitude which was to find God walking in Italy as in his favorite garden, not only in the morn but in the noon and eventide. He did more, perhaps, than any other traveller of the day to draw the attention of English poets and novelists to the descriptive and even philosophical possibilities of Italian scenery. As early as 1774 his "animated description" of Etna inspired a poet named Mercer to introduce the following lines into his *Poems*:

SICILIAN *Ætna!* what a height  
 For wand'ring Muse's happiest flight!  
 To trace, immense, on Nature's lap  
 Extensive drawn, the mighty map:  
 Trinacria's isle; the fertile plains;  
 Europa's shore, where Ceres reigns,  
 And Flœra lives; the Muses' land. . .

THE EARL OF CARLISLE, JOHN MERCER, AND OTHERS  
 ENGLISH APPRECIATION OF THE ITALIAN EPIC  
 POETS FORGES AHEAD: 1772-1775

It was probably in 1772, or even earlier, that Sir Joshua Reynolds painted the striking picture which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1773 with the title, *Count Ugolino and His Children in the Dungeon, as Described by Dante, in the 'Thirty-third Canto of the Inferno.* Reynolds' great hero, Michelangelo, had, according to Algarotti,<sup>4</sup> made designs for the whole *Commedia*, and, according to Jonathan Richardson,<sup>5</sup> composed a bas-relief of Ugolino sitting among his dying children. Now his humble servant, as an experiment in "history" painting, chose his subject from the same great poem. In his *Memoirs of Sir Joshua Reynolds* (1813) James Northcote says that it was either "Mr. Edmund Burke or Dr. Goldsmith, I am not certain which," who more immediately suggested the subject to Reynolds by telling him that a head he had painted, that of an old beggar, was exactly like that we must imagine for the dying Pisan. Some doubt is cast on this story by the fact that other writers assert the head to have been taken from a paver named White. Whatever the truth of its origin, the picture, once completed, excited a great deal of admiration and interest, was bought by the third Duke of Dorset for 400 guineas, and probably did much to advance the popularity of Dante in England. Toynbee points to an article on Mills' *Travels of Theodore Ducas* (1822) in the *Quarterly Review* for January, 1823, which asserts that "Dante was brought into fashion in Eng-

<sup>4</sup> *An Essay on Painting* (1764).

<sup>5</sup> *A Discourse of the Dignity, Certainty, Pleasure, and Advantage of the Science of a Connoisseur* (1719).

land" by this picture. John Scott's "Essay on Painting," written about this time though not published till later, contains a rhetorical question which attests the popularity it enjoyed:

Did Reynolds' hand with force too strong disclose  
Those looks that mark th' unutterable woes,  
When Ugoline the wretch in prison lies,  
And hears his dying children's piercing cries,  
And, while fell hunger haunts th' impervious walls,  
And one by one the suffering victims calls,  
Invokes the lightning's bolt those walls to rend,  
Or earth to open, and his miseries end?<sup>a</sup>

One of the first effects of this picture, according to Toynbee, who implies that Reynolds' friends may have enjoyed previews, was, probably, to inspire Frederick Howard, fifth Earl of Carlisle, the kinsman and guardian of Lord Byron, to attempt a verse translation of the subject from Dante. This, privately printed in *Poems* (1772), is the first published verse translation from Dante which we have encountered in the years under consideration. Baretti and Joseph Warton, as we have seen, had made prose versions of this same episode, and before them Richardson, the painter, and Gray had turned it into English blank verse. With Fox, with whom he travelled on the Continent after they left Cambridge, Carlisle seems to have shared passions for gambling and Italian poetry. His translation, while not subdued to what Byron called "The paralytic puling" of his later days, hardly suggests, I fear, the energetic young lord he seems to have been at the age of twenty-six. As a sample, we may quote his rendering of the lines already noticed in Baretti's version:

"When looking on my boys, in frantic fit  
Of maddening grief my senseless hands I bit.  
Alas! for hunger they mistook my rage:  
'Let us,' they cried, 'our Father's pains assuage;  
'Twas he, our Sire, who call'd us into day,  
Clad with this painful flesh our mortal clay;  
That flesh he gave he sure may take away.'—

"But why should I prolong the horrid tale?

<sup>a</sup> Scott's note on these verses, referring to Dante, is not noted in Toynbee.

Dismay and silent woe again prevail.  
No more that day we spoke!—Why in thy womb  
Then, cruel Earth, did we not meet our doom?  
Now the fourth morning rose; my eldest child  
Fell at his Father's feet; in accent wild,  
Struggling with pain, with his last fleeting breath,  
'Help me, my Sire,' he cried, and sunk in death.  
I saw the others follow one by one,  
Heard their last scream and their expiring groan.  
And now arose the last concluding day:  
As o'er each corse I grop'd my stumbling way,  
I called my Boys, though now they were no more;  
Yet still I call'd, till, sinking on the floor,  
Pale Hunger did what Grief refus'd to do—  
Forever clos'd this scene of pain and woe."

It was more especially the Ugolino episode which inspired John Mercer, the admirer of Brydone's description of Etna, to introduce a long poetical address to Dante into "Elysium: a Dream," contained in his *Poems* (1774). It is on the authority of a manuscript note in the British Museum copy of this work that I assign it to Mercer, who was, says the note, "a Scotch gentleman of great modesty and a benevolent disposition, but who, to serve a friend, committed a forgery, but without intending ultimately to defraud; he escaped out of the kingdom." In the poem referred to, our benevolent embezzler, finding himself in Erebus, implores Pluto to allow him to ascend into the regions of the blessed. There, his prayer granted, he meets Virgil, Horace, Dante, and others. Dante bears a "massy key," about which the poet questions him, only to hear:

"This hell unlocks—but mortal, say,  
Wilt thou bend with me thy way?  
Thro' all the penal dungeon dire;  
Or where the frozen regions show  
A sad variety of woe;  
Thro' all the dismal mansions wide,  
I will attend, thy faithful guide.  
—For thee shall Ugolino dread,  
With hair of half-devoured head  
Of false Rugiero, doom'd his prey,

From gory lips wipe blood away;  
 And tell thee all his horrid tale  
 Of Hunger's den, and Famine pale;  
 And curse, with imprecation drear,  
 [Th'] Perfidious wretch, and mangled tear."

But Mercer, having just escaped from hell by the skin of his teeth, declines Dante's offer:

"First of the modern bards that bore,  
 Italia's pride, the Tuscan shore!  
 Allighieri! thanks—I come  
 To see the blest Elysium,  
 Not hell Tartarian—"

Mercer's acquaintance with the Italian poets is further evinced by his poem, "Arthur's Seat," which has a motto from Petrarch and the following allusion, well annotated:

And hark! like solemn-sounding knell,  
 Distant curfew's doleful bell  
 (So Dante<sup>7</sup> sings, and gentle Gray)  
 Seems to mourn the death of day.

Interest in the less abstruse epic poets of Italy, it is pleasant to note, kept pace with the growing enthusiasm for Dante. In 1773 an edition of Teofilo Folengo's burlesque epic, the *Orlandino*, was brought out in Paris with the imprint of London, where it was probably expected to sell in numbers. This same year saw the publication, by the Baskerville press in Birmingham, of what seems to have been the first British edition of Ariosto. Issued in both quarto and octavo, prefaced with a life by G. A. Barotti, and adorned with several engravings by Bartolozzi and others, it remains one of the finest of Ariosto editions. Hoole now (1773) let the world know he was at work on a translation of Ariosto (to be discussed when finished) by publishing a liberal sample; and an anonymous author issued *A Translation of Part of the Twenty-third Canto of the Orlando Furioso* (1774). This, called a "specimen" of a new version of the whole, traces Orlando's declension

<sup>7</sup> Mercer's interest in Dante is not noticed by Toynbee.

into madness, beginning with his arrival among the trees where Angelica's name, entwined with Medoro's, leaves no doubt of the coupled state of her soul—and body. It translates thirty-six octaves of Ariosto into seventy-six riming quatrains of little or no merit. I cannot believe that their author actually translated the whole of Ariosto. Such insipid verses must soon have discouraged the translator himself. If really completed, the translation was fortunately never published. As a specimen of this specimen, we may give the following stanzas, flatter than Huggins', in which Orlando bewails his plight:

"Nor I—I am not what I now appear,  
He, he, that was Orlando once, is dead;  
He fell a victim to a perjurd fair,  
And lowly lies he now in earth's cold bed.

"I am his spirit, parted from its cell,  
Here wand'ring in the worst of hells, to prove,  
A sad example, what the wretch must feel  
Who hopes for aught but falsd faith in love."

Naked and without arms he begins to lay about him—

But sword nor other weapon did he need,  
Unequal to his grasp the sturdiest oak;  
A pine, in vain, uprear'd to heav'n its head:  
The stately ruin fell without a stroke.

And many more, as vain, their limbs extend,  
Inhabitants of twice an hundred years,  
Elms, ashes, firs, like willow saplings bend,  
And root and branch his matchless arm up tears.

Tasso himself continued to receive defense and applause during the 1770's. These, hardly necessary after the lengthy prefaces of Hoole and Doyne, were, I conceive, in the nature of expiatory rites. The surer Englishmen became of Tasso's merit, the more the injustice done him by Boileau and Addison preyed on their conscience. The eulogies of this time, designed to placate Tasso's injured ghost, usually attacked the author of the "Cinqant" and his English follower. "Tasso, indeed," said Percival Stockdale in the preface to his translation of the *Aminta* (1770), "has been



blasphemed by hardy and profane mouths. Boileau, one of the contemptible French rhymers, talked impertinently about the tinsel of Tasso; and the conceit has been echoed by criticks as frigid as himself. Such weak assailants cannot shake the reputation of Tasso, for it is founded upon a rock—"Tasso is a greater poet than Virgil." Edward Taylor, if it was indeed he who wrote *Cursory Remarks on Tragedy* (1774), attacked Boileau in the same strain: "it is no wonder that the fervid and bold invention of the Italians should be an object of envy and censure to . . . a mere servile imitator of the antient satyrists, in whom all their gall is highly concentrated, but in whom no vestige is to be found of their candour and good manners." After urging his countrymen never to give in to Frenchmen's "narrow-minded principle of despising all nations but their own," Taylor went on to elucidate the various beauties of the *Gerusalemme*. Notwithstanding his wintry critics, there are, said he, "more instances of the beauty of sentiment and simplicity in the works of Tasso than in any other poet (the ancients excepted). . ." Against the "cliquant" of the "French drawcansir" he adduced, usually in Italian, several specimens of "genuine and native gold." The description of Satan, which he compared with Milton's, is sufficient, he said, "to prove that the Italian language has energy and powers equal to the boldest and most sublime images." He doted on Tasso's "wonderful distinction of characters." More especially he loved to follow where, "By the potent wand of magic, the poet is enabled to conduct us into regions unexplored before. . . Who can climb the mountain with Carlo and Ubaldo, amidst such a variety of horrid monsters and uncouth shapes, without dismay and trembling; or who penetrate with them into the garden of the enchantress, Armida, without wonder and delight . . . ?"

It is not difficult to perceive from these manifestations in favor of the Italian epic poets that their day had dawned; not difficult to predict, indeed, that their noon was not far distant. Tasso had now established his welcome, and a series of translations acceptable to the times would go far toward putting Dante and Ariosto on their feet. How quickly these were to arrive we shall have occasion to notice.

EDWARD TAYLOR, PERCIVAL STOCKDALE, HANNAH MORE, AND  
OTHERS: THE ITALIAN THEATRE DEFENDED AND FURTHER  
IMITATED: 1774, WITH A LOOK BEFORE AND AFTER

If the *Cursory Remarks on Tragedy* (1774), quoted from above, was not written by Edward Taylor, born at Noan, Tipperary, it should probably be assigned to William Richardson, "Professor of Humanity, Glasgow."<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to note how many of the British revivers of interest in Italy, beginning with Doyne and Boswell, were either Scots or Irish. Taylor's book is important for its unusual knowledge of the history of Italian drama and its vigorous defense of the Italian stage. In his early defenses of Italian literature Baretti had, we remember, pooh-poohed the learned tragedies of his country, and found little to admire in the puling pastoral dramas of the Renaissance, the *Aminta* perhaps excepted. These early judgments he did not materially alter in his chapter called "Origin, Progress, and Present State of the Italian Stage" in the *Manners and Customs* (1768); and in them he had been followed, as always, by Joseph Warton, practically the only English critic to touch on these subjects before Taylor. Now, however, using the materials which Baretti himself had unearthed, a British champion of the Italian theatre started up, ready to outstrip the great defender of Italian literature himself. Taylor's *Remarks on Tragedy* was intended "throughout either to remove false, or mistaken, or unjustly severe censures that have been passed on foreign writers. . ." One of the most absurd of these mistakes was, he said, the currently repeated opinion that the Italians have no great tragic dramas. For his part, he was unwilling to decide to just what this error was due—whether to "blind deference to others, or to ignorance that seeks to conceal itself under the affectation of superior knowledge and taste, or to a narrow, sordid self-love that leads men to exalt the merit of their own countrymen in preference to foreign writers, and thus to gratify a selfish pride and tacitly and obliquely commend themselves."

Let Englishmen remember, said Taylor, that the very first

<sup>8</sup> Halkett and Laing suggest this alternative, while agreeing with Lowndes and the British Museum *Catalogue* in actually assigning the book to Taylor.

tragedy "written in any modern language," and by no means a bad one, issued from an Italian pen. This was the *Sofonisba* of Trissino, "the first among the moderns who composed a regular epic poem . . . free from the points and conceits usually objected against the Italian writers, particularly by those who are content to give up numberless beauties on account of a few imperfections. . ." While the dialogue of this tragedy is not always congruous to the characters, the piece is moving—"Sophonisba is the only unhappy sufferer; yet where youth, virtue, innocence, and beauty meet with an untimely fate, the tear of sympathy will overflow." Taylor's chapter, "On the *Rosmunda* of Rucellai," compared the Italian's simplicity of style to Sophocles', shuddered at Alboino drinking from the father's skull, and praised Rosmunda's final happiness as a conclusion "calculated to encourage . . . virtue. . ." Said Taylor:

I am well aware that the English critic will be apt to pronounce the tragedy before us, as well as the theatrical compositions in general of all southern nations, insipid, uninteresting, and unaffected; but he would do well to consider the different characters of nations, various as the climates they inhabit. . . What at Naples or at Rome would appall the heart with terror or dismay, or convulse it with all the agonizing throbs of pity and compassion, would, in the more impenetrable northern bosom, scarce excite the transitory shudder, or the feeble half-formed sigh.

Addison was quite right when he said that the modern Italians no longer resemble their ferocious Roman ancestors. The Italian climate was undoubtedly colder in classic days. If, with the coming of heat and Christianity, the Italians "sunk as heroes, they rose as men"—models of sensibility. "On the *Torrismondo* of Tasso" praised the unwitting incest of the play as a plight calculated to excite our compassion in the highest degree, especially when relieved by "choruses breathing the animated spirit of genuine and sublime poetry." Warm-hearted to a degree, Taylor everywhere adopted the idea that the Italians, those kings of the spirit, can, whatever obdurate French and English critics may have maintained, do no wrong.

Taylor's praise of Maffei's *Merope* and Metastasio's "tragedies"

was less novel. The former be lauded for a "simplicity and naïveté" exceedingly desirable in an age of bombast, asserting this tragedy—on the authority of all judges "who are not wholly ignorant of the method of education, the manners, and sensibility of the nation for whom it was composed"—to be "equal to most that are extant." It was on *La clemenza di Tito*, formerly adapted by Cleland (1754) and translated by Hoole (1767), that Taylor based his eulogy of Metastasio's mastery of "tragic composition." "Methinks I see the self-sufficient critic, whose knowledge is confined to his own or at most to the dead languages, smile with contempt at the word, opera; methinks I hear him already exclaim, with a rancour peculiar to pedantry, petulance, or ignorance, that . . . though the ear is delighted [by operas], neither the heart nor the judgment is interested or improved, and all this he will positively affirm and tenaciously maintain upon the authority of Mr. Addison." Addison! who composed a despicable "thing which he called the opera of Rosamond." O shame! From *Tito* Taylor quoted long passages to prove that Metastasio was, by any criterion of character-drawing or poetry, a great dramatist—not only no "stranger to the sublime," but possessed of "a finer ear than any poet."

Finally Taylor, chiefly in connection with the *Aminta*, advanced a defense of the brilliant Renaissance pastorals on which Metastasio had to a certain extent modelled his style and plots. Had some anonymous writer in the *Guardian* accused Tasso "of failing in the language, sentiments, passions, and designs in the pastoral style?" And had Joseph Warton echoed this writer? Then woe to them as perverters of Tasso's touching naïveté! Admitting that some of the sentiments of the *Aminta* may be "too refined for common pastoral," Taylor insisted that a poet is not to be blamed for falling short of standards which he never proposed to follow. Consider the prologue, he said; consider the courtiers for whom it was written; consider the poet's purpose—to reform these worldlings—and you will see that its treatment of pastoral life is consistent, pointed, inescapable, beautiful. It is too bad that Taylor, having made this fine start toward a historical defense of Tasso, Guarini, Ongaro, and Bonarelli della Rovere, did not bother to

complete it. It is too bad, too, from the point of view of this section of our study, that he did not extend his defense of the Italian theatre into the realm of comedy. Then had we had, perhaps, such an enthusiastic appreciation of Goldoni as I have looked in vain for in the literature of the period. Even as the case stands, it will be fair, I think, to tie to Taylor's devoted name such discussion as I can afford to give to the actual influence of Italian plays in England from 1770 to 1785.

To begin, then, with the Renaissance pastorals, never before discussed in these pages, we may note that, slightly "sophisticated" as they were, they enjoyed a certain popularity with Italian-reading Britons. As early in our study as 1763 an edition of Guarini's *Pastor fido* had appeared in Glasgow. This was followed in the days we are now considering by Bonarelli della Rovere's *Filli di Sciro* (Glasgow, 1772) and by editions of the *Pastor fido* (1774 and 1778) and *Aminta* (1780) bearing London imprints.<sup>9</sup> While not widely imitated—Mrs. Lennox's *Philander* (1758) seems to be the only play that owes anything directly to them—these gorgeous dramatic "toys" were undoubtedly admired and even loved. Both the *Aminta* and the *Pastor fido* were translated, the former by Percival Stockdale as *The Amyntas* (1770), the latter by William Grove as *The Faithful Shepherd* (1782), each translator modelling his verses and rimes on his original. These plays, in truth, had never passed out of fashion in England. Because they formed a kind of species of their own, the "rules" had had no power against them. Stockdale's translation of Tasso was at least the seventh of its kind. While Grove's version of Guarini was only the fourth—the first new one since Sir Richard Fanshawe's (1648)—it is necessary to remember that Fanshawe had been at least twice "modernized" (1677 and 1736). These courtly dreams of country life—resounding with colorful songs in praise of the golden age, and enveloped in an aura of professedly innocent sensuality—are well calculated to appeal to all kinds of people. The courtiers of the Restoration had been able to use them to whip their jaded appetites; Augustan wits, to whip the

<sup>9</sup> Two "Londra" editions of Sannazzaro's *Arcadia* (1768 and 1781) may be mentioned at this point. The second of these, the *Pastor fido* of 1778, and the *Aminta* of 1780 were published in Leghorn.

jaded appetites of the courtiers. Now it was possible for our pre-romantics to find in them the really naïve and simple feelings of an early world, comparable to those enjoyed by Beattie's shepherd minstrel. Refusing to dwell on the supersophistication of a Corisca, they lingered reverently over the timid innocence which frightened Tasso's Silvia and Guarini's Silvio from the first advances of love almost as innocent. They liked to trace the increasingly sultry stages by which their "cruel modesty learned to surrender to chaste connubial bliss." Just as the aristocracy had once turned the innocence of these plays to sensual uses, now the sentimental middle classes turned their sensuality to illustrations of what we may call a higher innocence—a torrid innocence of the kind so popular with the romantic story-tellers to come.

Stockdale, in his translation of Tasso, insisted that the sentiments of the piece, if not altogether "characteristick of rural life" as it is, are true to those we may imagine for the golden age, the depiction of which is the poet's highest office—"It is the province of the poet to transport us into an agreeable and blooming region of his own creating: this is his birth-right. . ." Whoever cannot take pleasure in Tasso's idealized view of the "innocuous life" is "lost to a sense of peace, innocence, and virtue." The chorus in praise of the "Simple and happy age of gold!" was undoubtedly one of Stockdale's favorite passages, though his enthusiasm for it failed to transmute it into more than passable English verse:

The virgin's growing breast was then unveiled,  
For no false fear that artless breast assailed;  
And, bold through innocence, the naked maid  
Oft in the river with her shepherd played.  
'Tis Honour which, in these flagitious times,  
Blasphemes the deeds of nature into crimes.

It was Tasso's skillful commingling of the pastoral nudism of Silvia, bound by the satyr, with sentiments like the following which gave the *Aminta* a really definite place in the English romantic imagination:

The trifling part the sensual organs give us  
Is gross, and animal, and soon grows vapid;

The finer part, which rises from the mind,  
 Is lasting, active, spirit all, and Æther. . .  
 In every nerve it beats, through every pore  
 It breathes, its ardour buoys our mortal frame;  
 It purifies, it subtilizes matter,  
 And gives to man the pleasures of a god.

These pastoral plays achieve just such an artistic fusion of sense and spirit, desire and blamelessness, as many of the romantic poets tried to wring from life itself.

While many of Guarini's scenes are even warmer than Tasso's, his sentiments can be proportionately chaste. His songs and speeches on the happy golden age are, indeed, filled with a melancholy hatred of courts, a deep-seated longing for fresh air, which make them more moving than Tasso's panegyrics. Among those innocently amorous scenes in which Mirtillo plays with Amarilli at blindman's buff, or Dorinda, for pages, fondles Silvio's ivory breast, we come upon scenes like that between Corisca and the satyr which definitely need to be relieved by a chorus of Arcadian sentiments:

O beauteous Golden Age,  
 When, in its Infant Stage,  
 Milk to the World was Food,  
 Its Cradle was the Wood;  
 When Flocks, untouch'd, enjoyed their Offspring dear,  
 Nor yet the Sword, nor Poison Men did fear. . . .  
 Then, mid the Meads and Brooks,  
 Kind Jokes, and kinder Looks,  
 The Torches lighted up of lawful Bliss;  
 Then did the Nymphs and Swains impart  
 In artless Words the Heart,  
 And Hymen stamp'd the Joy, and seal'd the Kiss,  
 Which still the more secure, the sweeter 'tis!

Except for verse experiments like this, made in imitation of Guarini, Grove's translation of the *Pastor fido* is extremely dull. Another favorite passage of this kind was the speech of Amarilli from Act II, which we may give here, not from Grove, but from Agostino Isola's *Pieces Selected from the Italian Poets* (1778).

Isola, the grandfather of Lamb's adopted child, Emma, had been appointed teacher of Italian at Cambridge in 1768 by the influence of Gray, himself just nominated to the professorship of modern history. These "pieces," chosen by Isola, were translated at his request by several "Gentlemen of the University." That from Guarini, one of the longest, runs in part as follows:

Poor yet content, the rural maid may find  
In Nature much congenial with her mind.—  
The milky streams her goats at eve impart  
Nourish the milky mildness of her heart,  
And with her in-born sweetness well agree  
The honied treasures of th' industrious bee.  
In the clear brook her beauteous limbs she laves,  
Or draws her beverage from its shining waves,  
Whose surface still her truest glass is found,  
Whilst as she smiles, creation smiles around. . . .  
Poor yet content!—this is indeed to live,  
Free from those daily deaths that disappointments give!

It is interesting to remember that the scene in which these lines occur had been translated into Latin by Gray himself.

From that modern Italian poet who had learned so many dramatic tricks from the *Pastor fido* English dramatists, following Hoole, continued to adapt and alter occasional "tragedies." Hannah More's *Inflexible Captive* (1774) was a "free translation" of Metastasio's *Attilio Regolo* with "such new scenes as were necessary to form it into a tragedy of *five* acts," while William Hodson's *Arxaces* (1775) was founded on *Ezio*. Captain Charles Hamilton's *Patriot* (1784), although "entitled an alteration," was "but an humble translation" of *Temistocle*. In her *Siege of Sinope* (1781) Mrs. Frances Brooke, while merely adapting a third-rate Italian opera, thought she was altering lines equal to those of this mellifluous genius! All these plays, as usual, were called tragedies, though their endings, Hodson's excepted, were sufficiently happy. Hodson, indeed, changed many things besides the dénouement of his original, but his claim that "but a small number of scenes are borrowed from thence" is not strictly accurate. At least twenty of his scenes, and these among the more important,



are not only adapted but often translated from Metastasio's drama of Ezio (here called Arcaces), the noble warrior who refuses to yield his promised bride either to the murderous lust of his monarch or the revengeful machinations of her inconsiderate father. Hannah More's *Inflexible Captive*, presenting the life of a Roman who gave "his labours, his liberty, and his life for the good of his country," contains only two or three scenes not found in the Italian. It must be confessed, on the other hand, that many of Regulus's (not too) "naïve" speeches on his own self-sacrifice (called by a Carthaginian his "romantic madness!") are expanded into what sounds very much like artful bombast. Mrs. Brooke's pseudo-Metastasian tragedy<sup>10</sup> tells how a fiendishly revengeful father, Athridates, King of Cappadocia, invites the Romans to help him compass the deaths of his own daughter, of Pharnaces, King of Pontus, with whom she has eloped, and of their little son. However, just as Athridates is about to sacrifice both mother and child to his inhuman revenge, Pharnaces routs the Romans and drives him, with forgiveness, to suicide. In Hamilton's *Patriot* we have a typical Metastasian story. The exiled Themistocles, who has become the friend and general of his former foe, the generous and forgiving Xerxes, King of Persia, is ordered to attack his native country. Torn between patriotism and gratitude to his benefactor, he decides to commit suicide. But Xerxes, at the last minute, outdoes him in magnanimity by swearing eternal friendship to Greece and giving Aspasia, Themistocles' daughter, to the man from whom he was about to force her. These plays from the south, lifeless as they often seem, continue to represent what was perhaps the most living form of Italian literary influence in England at this time, and must be mentioned accordingly. From Italian opera English tragedy was supposed to be gaining that "Majesty in Simplicity which is far above all the Quaintness of Wit." If not really a powerful force in the romantic tragedy to come, Allardyce Nicoll feels that Metastasio, "with his insistence on *generosità*, on *magnanimità*, *grandezza di animo* and what not, proved a fore-runner of romantic melodrama." A handsome twelve-volume "Londra" edition of his *Opere* was brought out in Leghorn in 1782-83.

<sup>10</sup> The opera on which Mrs. Brooke based her play was called *Mitridate a Sinope* (Florence, 1779).

The influence of Goldoni, first noticed in Foote, grew slowly but steadily more important. A three-volume edition of many of his best plays, *Commedie scelte*, was brought out in London in 1777. English adaptations, exclusive of comic operas, included Thomas Vaughan's *Hotel; or, The Double Valet* (1776), Mrs. Elizabeth Griffith's *Times* (1780), Robert Jephson's *Hotel; or, The Servant with Two Masters* (1783), and W. C. Oulton's *Curiosity* (1785). None of these, unfortunately, was founded on a comedy of much importance. If Oulton's unpublished play was really adapted, as is supposed, from *Le donne curiose*, it must have been the best of them. *Il servitore di due padroni*, on which the two *Hotels* were founded, had nothing to teach the English stage. Unlike most of Goldoni's works, it is a farce of incident rather than of manners, in which all the action moves toward the highly artificial situation where it becomes possible for the wily servant of two masters to hail one of them as his mistress. Mrs. Griffith's *Times*, much more nearly an essay in comedy of manners, is founded on Goldoni's Parisian success, *Le Bourru bienfaisant*. Imitated at the suggestion of Garrick, it is filled with the caprices of Sir William Woodley, an elderly bachelor, who conceals under a dictatorial and crusty manner a wildly generous disposition. Infuriated by a nephew who has married without consulting him, Sir William tries to marry off a niece without letting her know the intended husband's name. Needless to say, she too marries the person of her choice. All the culprits, fallen on hard times, are taken back to Sir William's heart. The best thing in this shaky play is, perhaps, the typically Goldonian idea on which it is raised.

It will not be long now before we have something more interesting to report of the Italian drama in England.

SUSANNAH DOBSON, THOMAS LE MESURIER, ALEXANDER  
FRASER TYTLER, THE EARL OF CHARLEMONT, AND  
OTHERS: PETRARCH COMES BACK INTO ENGLISH  
LITERATURE: 1775 AND AFTER

In spite of the growing popularity of the Italian epic and drama, the Italian lyric, so rich a subject, remained little known in England till the year which saw the publication of Susannah Dobson's *Life of Petrarch* (1775). This work, being merely a

condensation of the Abbé de Sade's *Mémoires pour la vie de François Pétrarque* (1764-67), was not an English product. It deserves, nevertheless, our close attention. For it is no exaggeration, I believe, to say that this book restored Petrarch, after a hundred and fifty years of banishment, to an active part in English literature. In the humble capacity of a translator, Mrs. Dobson, the wife of a physician of Liverpool—the city which was soon to produce Italy's most formidable champion—did for Petrarch what Baretti, Huggins, Doyne, and others had done for Italy's epic poets. By 1805 her translation enjoyed one Irish and six English editions, many of which were illustrated with swooning copperplates.

Writing of love about 1615, Drummond of Hawthornden said that "The best and most exquisite poet of this subject, by consent of the whole senate of poets, is Petrarch." Elizabethan poets apparently found no poems so moving as those in which a lovesick youth doted on the beauty of a disdainful mistress, eased his heart of endless sighs and groans, and tried to wrest pleasure and even moral benefit from her killing looks. With these sentiments, borrowed from the sonnets to Laura *in vita*, they filled, as everyone knows, many volumes of verse. Of the sonnets to Laura *in morte*, in which Petrarch bewails his lady's death and finally wrings a kind of consolation and spiritual triumph from his unshaken devotion, they were not so fond. Drummond himself seems to have been the first to imitate him in celebrating "a mistress dead," yet Drummond was the last of the great English Petrarchists. Even before his time the idea had got abroad in England that it was weak and unmanly to love a woman who scorned to render kiss for kiss and mingle body with body. This attitude soon injured the sonnets to Laura *in vita*. Those to Laura *in morte*, never popular, were later discredited by cavalier poets who found their despair insipid and their spiritual triumph too "Platonic" or "metaphysical." By the early eighteenth century Petrarch, in some of his sonnets, was held to be a mere whining baby; in the others, a metaphysician bent on leading his readers to realms whither a man of sense found it impossible to follow. His poems could,

in a word, be described—and dismissed—as silly sentiments tricked out in monotonous rimes and execrable *concetti*.

I do not mean to say, of course, that lovers of Petrarch had ever entirely disappeared from the English scene. Philip Ayres clung to him in the Restoration; Mrs. Monck, in the days of Queen Anne. There must always have been in the world sorrow of love and sorrow of death; and people with a disposition to dwell on their troubles must often have leaned toward Petrarch. Mountinous Vaucluse, with the fountain of Sorga, whither Petrarch withdrew from the world to weep, now at life, now at death, was never really forgotten. Indeed, by the beginning of the days we are studying, Englishmen's minds had again begun to turn, however diffidently, toward that shrine of a broken heart. For some time it had been becoming clearer and clearer that tears were not so much the badge of unmanliness as the unfailing pledge of a virtuous heart. The rise of the middle class was operating indirectly to make it possible for Englishmen once more to weep for love and die of sorrow. Forces beyond the control of Warton and Baretti were combining in the 1760's to restore Petrarch to popularity. Before he could take his place in sensitive middle-class hearts, however, it was necessary to remove the charge of metaphysicality which lay so heavy on many of the sonnets to Laura. Some critics had even gone so far as to suggest that Laura had been an entirely imaginary being, invented by the poet to be the first rung in a Platonic ladder. This was where Mrs. Dobson with her translation from the French came in. It was her *Life of Petrarch* which made the Italian poet a hero of eighteenth-century sensibility.

Even before the appearance of Mrs. Dobson's famous translation there were, as we have seen, evidences of a renewed interest in Petrarch. Furthermore, about the year 1770 certain poets, apparently impressed with the sincerity of his grief, if not of his passion, began to make hesitant translations from his sonnets. Dr. John Langhorne translated at least three, not always in the strict form of the originals. All were from the poems to Laura *in morte*, including the famous sonnet beginning, "Se lamentar

augelli, o verdi fronde," in which Laura assures Petrarch of a blessedness to which he too may aspire, and urges him to

Cherish no more those visionary tears  
For me, who range yon light-invested sky!  
For me, who triumph in eternal years!

In *Poems, Consisting Chiefly of Translations from the Asiatick Languages* (1772) Sir William Jones included "An Ode of Petrarch to the Fountain of Valchiusa" and "Laura, an Elegy from Petrarch." The former is a translation of the *canzone* beginning, "Chiare, fresche, e dolci acque," uninspired, and rimed as follows:

Ye clear and sparkling streams,  
Warm'd by the sunny beams,  
Through whose transparent crystal Laura play'd;  
Ye boughs, that deck the grove,  
Where spring her chaplets wove,  
While Laura lay beneath the quiv'ring shade. . .

The latter is a patchwork of twelve different sonnets, sometimes translated in bits, sometimes entire. The poem—taken from the sonnets to Laura *in morte*—begins in despair and rises at the end to an exultation in the assurance that, purified by his funereal faith to an angel, the poet will meet her again in heaven. The wording of "Laura" is rather worse than that of the ode to the fountain of Vaucluse. It begins, in imitation of "Zefiro torna, e 'l bel tempo rimena," with the following couplets:

In this fair season, when the whisp'ring gales  
Drop show'rs of fragrance o'er the bloomy vales,  
From bow'r to bow'r the vernal warblers play,  
The skies are cloudless, and the meads are gay. . .

In spite of the badness of his verse, Sir William Jones holds an important place in the history of Petrarch in England. His translations and imitations seem to have been the most important, in the matter of bulk, since Jacobean times. Because they were widely read, they furnished a kind of corner stone for the house which was to rise on the foundations laid by Mrs. Dobson's Sade.

Sir William was also beforehand with the abbé in treating Petrarch's passion as undoubtedly poured on a real woman. In an essay, "On the Arts, Commonly Called Imitative,"<sup>11</sup> he averred—in support of his thesis that poets should imitate nature, not each other—that the Italians stick closer to nature than most. Tasso he affirmed to be a master in "unaffected endearments and mild complaints," while it seemed clear to him that "*Petrarch* was, certainly, too deeply affected with real grief . . . to *imitate* the passions of others."

The fact that Englishmen had begun to hanker after the poet of love and Laura before 1775 is further illustrated by a passage in Michael Wodhull's *Poems* (1772). Addressing the whole tribe of dryads, Wodhull ventured the opinion that they, though so hard to come upon in eighteenth-century England, could undoubtedly be found residing at Avignon

By cool Valclusa's ebbing well, . . .  
Where on the rude uncultur'd ground  
Your Bard reclin'd his sinking head:  
For there, engrav'd upon the rind  
Of every plane, and spreading beach,  
The fond complaints of love ye find,  
Which move beyond the power of speech;  
And there he shed the tender tear  
O'er his departed Laura's bier.

Still, English lovers of Petrarch could not let themselves go. They did not know enough about him; and then, as I said before, the charge of metaphysical flights laid the sincerity of his grief open to suspicion.

But now Mrs. Dobson published an abridged translation of the Abbé de Sade's voluminous biography (1775). The abbé had news to astonish the ears of literary Europe. He had discovered the identity of Petrarch's Laura. He knew, in fact, all about her. She was not only a creature of flesh and blood—she was, when Petrarch met her, a married woman, wife of Hugues de Sade, ancestor of the abbé himself, to whom she bore before her death at least eleven children! It was from the archives of his own family that

<sup>11</sup> In *Poems* (1772).

the abbé attempted to prove his case. As the corner stone of his argument, however, he adopted as proof of Laura's burial place a spurious sonnet, "Qui riposan quei [sic] caste e felici ossa," and a medal, both exhumed from a tomb in the church of the Cordeliers at Avignon in 1533. The structure of fact which the abbé raised on this shaky foundation—a fuller political, social, and literary history of the fourteenth century than had yet appeared in Europe—gave his assertions about Petrarch a weightiness which they did not, perhaps, possess. Whether true or not, they seem to have dispersed for the time being the old charge of metaphysicality; made Englishmen really feel "that all the accounts of her as an allegorical person . . . were the invention of romancers. . ."

Petrarch's passion was for a real woman. She was forced to scorn his advances because of her married duty. All that she could do for him without the sacrifice of her virtue she did. It was a hard case for a woman of good taste and good conduct; for her lover, it was still harder. Always to long, to live for nothing but an occasional sight of her beauty, to expect no solid comfort or reward—such was Petrarch's life. And then to lose the glamour of her sometimes pitying eyes! It was enough to sharpen a man's sensibilities to a deadly keen edge. Do not wonder, said Sade, that the poet sometimes fainted with his woes. It is difficult to understand such constancy to grief, such sensibility. But Italians are like that. Though no admirer of Petrarch, Barette had been willing to admit the typically Italian quality of his passion. If you wish to understand how Italians regard women, you must really, he had said in the *Manners and Customs*, read the Abbé de Sade's life of Petrarch. It may have been his praise of this book which led Mrs. Dobson to translate it, especially where he claimed for the abbé that "he made himself such a master of our manners and customs that in my opinion no writer, either foreign or Italian, within the compass of my knowledge, knew better than he whatever has been relative to them for these four hundred years." While careful to point out that Petrarch's extreme sensibility in a lost cause offers "a striking lesson for youth!" the abbé made the most of his story. For nearly every important sonnet and *canzone* he recreated the scene in such a vivid way as to bring Laura and her

lover before the reader's eyes. Reading the life was thus made a complete introduction to the *Rime*, from which Mrs. Dobson made several prose translations. The Abbé de Sade humanized and popularized Petrarch. By freeing him from the charge of allegory, he left an age, already fond of tears, at liberty to find inspiration in the poet who "From youth to manhood . . . was a prey to the keenest sensibility. . ."

Several Englishmen of importance were sceptical of the French abbé's story. These included Horace Walpole and a pair of learned Scots, James Beattie, the author of *The Minstrel*, and Alexander Fraser Tytler, later Lord Woodhouselee, who was appointed Professor of Universal History in Edinburgh University in 1780. Beattie considered the biography "to be no better than a job contrived by the bookseller, and executed by the author." Tytler, who admired Petrarch as a poet and Sade as a historian, felt that the story of Petrarch dancing attendance on the flirtatious wife of Hugues de Sade damaged the poet "in the most important point of his character, his *morals*," and deserved serious refutation. This he gave it in two small works, one called an *Essay on the Life and Character of Petrarch* (1784), the other, a "Dissertation on an Historical Hypothesis of the Abbé de Sade" (printed in the fourth volume of the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*). These two works, revised and somewhat enlarged, were reprinted in 1810 as *An Historical and Critical Essay on the Life and Character of Petrarch*. In them Tytler used all his historical and polemic acumen to prove that Laura had never married, borne anyone eleven children, nor tempted Petrarch to burn with any but "an honourable, and a virtuous passion. . ." While disagreeing with Sade on the identity of Laura, he entirely agreed—and this, from our point of view, was what mattered—that Laura was a creature of flesh and blood: "the supposition of a Platonic love cannot . . . be admitted." Thus he united with the abbé to expel the old allegorical interpretation of Petrarch's passion. Modern readers find it difficult to conceive the cold weight of Platonic construction which was once put upon the *Rime*. Certainly there was little justification for it in the poems themselves.

Before going on to show how Englishmen welcomed the new



Petrarch of Sade, we may pause for a moment to note that the abbé's biography brought to English attention so many colorful episodes from Italian history that it deserves to stand, in this respect, along with the books of Cork and Robertson. Here were notable "domestic tragedies" and imposing patriots galore. The most important tragedy was, of course, that in which the young Queen of Naples, Giovanna I, had her husband, Andrew of Hungary, strangled in order that she might marry Luigi di Taranto. That, at least, was the way Sade interpreted the murder. He knew, of course, that the pope, Rienzi, Boccaccio, and Petrarch himself had all agreed in declaring her guiltless, yet "it is hardly to be doubted that she knew of the plot, which was executed, at the very door of her chamber, by her lovers, her confidants, and her servants. . . It is not, however, surprising she should be acquitted, for she was only eighteen years of age, and extremely beautiful." Giovanna's taking, in rather quick succession, three more husbands caused her to be looked upon in England as a prototype of that variety of abandoned queen of which Scottish Mary was the consummate specimen. When Landor came, years later, to defend Giovanna's reputation, it took, you remember, three full-length plays to serve his purpose! As for Italian patriots, the chief amongst the men introduced under this guise by Sade were old Stefano Colonna and Rienzi, last of the tribunes. The highly dramatic career of this latter he sketched at some length, dwelling on the great period when the tribune swayed all Italy by the force of his eloquence and virtue. We are told that Petrarch, exulting in the thought of the ancient Roman Republic come again, stinted no praise of the "Modern Brutus!" to whom "the Romans and their posterity will owe . . . the great happiness of living and dying free." Not the least of Sade's patriots was Petrarch himself, who was continually trying, both as ambassador and as letter-writer, to reconcile the warring states of Italy and unite them in the common cause of preserving their liberty against the threatened invasions of *tramontani*. He "idolized his native country," says Sade, "and trembled lest it should come under the domination of slaves; for thus he called the French and the Germans." From many of his poems, too, Englishmen could infer how dearly

Petrarch loved "il bel paese / Ch'Apennin parte, e 'l mar circonda e l'Alpe." Christopher Hervey, as we have seen, had stressed the hatred that Michelangelo and Filicaia felt for the invaders of their country. Now, as English interest in Italian independence began to ripen, Petrarch was to be added to the list of patriot poets.

Meanwhile he continued the poet of love and Laura. His melancholy sonnets began to be extravagantly admired, widely translated, and often imitated. In 1777 appeared an anonymous book called *Sonnets and Odes Translated from the Italian of Petrarch; with the Original Text, and Some Account of His Life*. This the *Dictionary of National Biography* attributes to John Nott, calling it the first edition of his *Petrarch Translated; in a Selection of His Sonnets and Odes* (1808). These books, however, resemble each other in nothing whatever except the choice of certain popular sonnets for translation. As contrasted with the seventy sonnets and ten "odes" translated by Nott, the writer of 1777 has only thirty of the former and three of the latter. Those translations which they happen to make in common do not resemble each other even in such turns of phrase as might fall accidentally from writers imitating the same original. Nor are the 1808 poems perceptibly better translations than those of 1777; often, in fact, less happy. Nott had an ambition to turn the complete *Rime* into English verse, and did so. The author of 1777 felt, on the other hand, that "Few persons . . . would attempt to translate all the Sonnets . . . by reason of the great difficulty of the verse, the perplexities of the author, and the quibbles with which he abounds. . ." The writer who first turned a fair-sized portion of Petrarch into English verse must remain, I am afraid, anonymous.

In his short preface our translator states just what we might have supposed to be the case: "No poet has been more frequently mentioned, and none perhaps less known, than Petrarch: of those who read Italian, many I am certain have not studied his poetry, deterred by the obscurities which perpetually occur. . . The English reader cannot have any idea of Petrarch, no material portion of his poetry having yet been attempted in English verse. . ." He voiced a criticism pretty generally current in the early days of Petrarch's new popularity when he affirmed, with reference to

his having turned only thirty of the sonnets into English, that no one "perhaps would want to read more of them than I have comprised in this little collection; for, sweet as they are, their number must cloy, being but the same thoughts on the same subjects: I have therefore selected such as I thought the most beautiful. . ." These included twenty-three sonnets, one *sestina*, and one *canzone* from the poems to Laura *in vita*, which we may call from now on Part I; seven sonnets and one *canzone* from those to Laura *in morte*, or Part II; and a version of the "Sonnet found in Laura's Tomb" in 1533. He gave the Italian text "lest some of the English Sonnets may appear ridiculous, particularly those abounding with *concelli*. . ." The specter of French criticism, we see, was not yet laid in 1777. As a sample of this writer's translation, not by any means incompetent, we may give the sonnet beginning, "Quando 'l sol bagna in mar l'aurato carro":

When Phoebus lashes to the western main  
 His fiery steeds, and shades the lurid air,  
 Grief shades my soul, my night is spent in care;  
 Yon moon, yon stars, yon heaven begin my pain.  
 Wretch that I am! full oft I urge in vain  
 To heedless beings all those pangs I bear;  
 Of the false world, of an unpitying Fair,  
 Of Love, and fickle fortune I complain!  
 From eve's last glance till morning's earliest ray  
 Sleep shuns my couch; rest quits my tearful eye;  
 And my rack'd breast heaves many a plaintive sigh.  
 Then bright Aurora cheers the rising day,  
 But cheers not me—for to my sorrowing heart  
 One sun alone can cheering light impart!

It is interesting to note how strictly this writer observes the Italian sonnet form. There can be no doubt, I think, that it was largely in imitation of Petrarch that this form, never entirely dropped, of course, was again widely taken up in England during the latter years of the eighteenth century.

Agostino Isola persuaded his Cambridge students to turn three of Petrarch's sonnets into English, two from Part I, one from II. The next important translation after 1777 was that of Thomas

Le Mesurier, M.A., Fellow of New College, Oxford, who converted twenty-four sonnets. Though his *Translations, Chiefly from the Italian of Petrarch and Metastasio* was completed about 1782, it was not published till 1795. Mesurier did not translate merely to give his readers a taste of the exotic. He rather translated, as some have written, out of an overflowing heart, at "that early age when the mind is particularly alive to the sensations described by Petrarch, Metastasio, and Zappi." Mesurier seems to have been fired to his task by the striking resemblance in character between Laura and a certain "Miss Mary \* \* \* \*" to whom he dedicated his translations:

While half thy sex in this alone agree,  
 Their own frail forms to court at self-love's shrine,  
 Be this thy mirrour: here, Maria, see  
 What once was Laura's boast, and still is thine:  
 The decent grace of native purity  
 That in each action speaks, each look divine,  
 Taste, wisdom, modest love, and sympathy,  
 How bright in Petrarch's muse their glories shine!

The greatest merit of his translations, said Mesurier, was their closeness to their originals, for which reason he too thought it desirable to give the Italian text along with the English. They include thirteen sonnets from Part I; eleven from Part II. The following sonnet—"Vago augelletto che cantando vai"—is a fair sample of this young writer's rather graceful versions:

Enchanting bird, that of the bliss thou'st known  
 Pour'st thy lorn tale or plaints that sweetly glide,  
 Seeing the night and winter at thy side,  
 And all thy day and spring behind thee flown:  
 If, as thou know'st the cause that makes thee groan,  
 Thou knew'st alike my woes to thine allied,  
 Thou'd'st come in this ill-fated breast to hide,  
 And mix with mine thy melancholy moan.

Yet ill accord our losses when compar'd:  
 She yet may live whom sorrowing thou hast sought,  
 While me, all hopeless, heav'n and death have barr'd;  
 But the sad hour and season, and the thought

Of all the sweet and bitter years I've shar'd,  
 Sadly to talk with thee my mind have wrought.

Mesurier<sup>12</sup> sometimes substituted the Shakespearean for the Italian sonnet form.

As a translator of Petrarch, Tytler himself may not be overlooked. In his original *Essay on the Life and Character of Petrarch* he included translations of seven sonnets, increased in the enlarged edition of 1810 to twelve. These versions had some fame in their day for precision and studied elegance. Five of the twelve were from Part I; seven, from Part II. Tytler did not follow the form of his original so closely as the poets we have just considered, sometimes developing Petrarch's theme with the freedom usually appropriated to the ode. The following specimen—"Sento l'aura mia antica, e i dolci colli"—has a modified Shakespearean rime scheme:

Once more I breathe that sweet accustom'd air;  
 I view those hills, dear regions of delight,  
 Whence rose the beam that erewhile shone so fair,  
 While Heaven so pleas'd to bless me with her sight.

But now, for ever gone that rapturous dream:  
 All blank the prospect—darkly low'rs the day;  
 Widow'd are those green fields, disturb'd the stream;  
 And void and cold the nest in which she lay!

Yet here I wander; here my only trust  
 Of rest and peace still harbours—here at last,  
 The scene once clos'd, life's airy vision past,  
 I hope to sleep, forgotten in the dust.

I've serv'd a rigorous master: all my meed,  
 Torment while living,—and oblivion, dead!

In the year of Tytler's *Essay*, 1784, and in 1778 there appeared "Londra" editions of Petrarch's *Rime*, one certainly, the other probably, printed in Leghorn, partly for British consumption. Petrarch had returned to British bosoms. Nor is it to be long before we find him again in the bosom of English literature.

<sup>12</sup> This author did not treat "Le" as part of his surname.

Before verging on this subject, we may glance at the Earl of Charlemont's translations from Petrarch. These (*Select Sonnets of Petrarch*), though not published till 1822, twenty-three years after his death, seem to have been composed in the 1780's and may be conjecturally assigned to 1785. James Caulfield, fourth Viscount and first Earl of Charlemont, combined in his life two not wholly discordant passions: one for Irish independence, the other for Italian literature. It was to Charlemont that Baretti dedicated his great defense of Italy (1768), with the assertion that "Your knowledge of its language and manners is hardly less than my own, who am a native of that country; and your knowledge of its literature much more extensive." The Irish nobleman, a friend of Johnson, Goldsmith, and Reynolds, seems to have had an ambitious scheme to popularize in the islands that poetry which had been so long neglected. What he planned was, apparently, a series of translations of the chief Italian poets from Dante down, to be accompanied by illustrative notes which, taken together, were to form a brief history of Italian literature. Perhaps his work for Ireland interfered with his extensive plan; at any rate, all that has come down to us are the translations from Petrarch, called in the foreword to the edition of 1822 "a small portion of a work . . . intended to illustrate in a similar manner the writings of the great Italian poets from Dante to Metastasio." These include twenty-one sonnets and one *canzone*, selected about equally from Parts I and II. Of Charlemont's rather bluff, enthusiastic, and even naïve renderings, we may give his version of "Zefiro torna," so thoroughly flattened by Sir William Jones:

Zephyr returns, and winter's rage restrains,  
With herbs, with flowers, with blooming progeny!  
Now Progne prattles, Philomel complains,  
And spring assumes her robe of various dye;  
The meadows smile, heav'n glows, nor Jove disdains  
To view his daughter with delighted eye,  
While Love through universal nature reigns,  
And life is fill'd with amorous sympathy!

But grief, not joy, returns to me forlorn,  
And sighs, which from my inmost heart proceed

For her by whom to heaven its keys were borne.  
The song of birds, the flower-enamell'd mead,  
And graceful acts, which most the fair adorn,  
A desert seem, and beasts of savage breed!

In 1780 Charles James published *A Poetical Epistle from Petrarch to Laura*, a work which I have not seen, but in which the English poet probably made the Italian pass in review the ceaseless sorrows of his life as described by Sade. The truth is that Petrarch was not so much the poet of love and Laura as of melancholy itself. Whether mourning his lady's cruelty or her demise itself, he donned always the same dark cloak, found the same irony in the advent of spring and the beauty of nature, stretched his weary limbs by the same murmuring fountain. His greatest poetic accomplishment was, perhaps, the skill with which he managed to blend the many moods of nature with his almost constant mood of gentle despair. When, now, through Sade's life and some of the translations we have been considering, Englishmen were enabled to appreciate his skill in pathetic song, they hailed him as the *maestro* of an art on which they had often tried their hand. Melancholy, a mood ever congenial to English poets, seems to have been peculiarly popular in the eighteenth century. The outstanding example is, perhaps, Gray's *Elegy Wrote in a Country Church Yard* (1751), which, beginning with a line translated from Dante, is done in quatrains. The growing popularity of Petrarch after 1775 made it appear, however, that an ideal form for the expression of sorrow, disappointment, and despair was the Italian sonnet. In a very short time this was taken up and exploited by a whole host of sonneteers, including Anna Seward, Mrs. Mary Robinson, Sir Brooke Boothby, Alexander Thomson, Henry Kirke White, Mary Stockdale, Mary Johnson, Helen Maria Williams, Anna Maria Porter, and others too numerous to count. Some of these I shall have occasion to consider in their place. Here I am concerned only with Mrs. Charlotte Smith and William Lisle Bowles, who seem to have been the first notable imitators of Petrarch after 1775. The former's *Elegiac Sonnets and Other Essays* (1784; later enlarged) contains three translations from Petrarch, a sonnet obviously based on one of his, and a number of original productions which can hardly be distin-

guished from the translations. Just what made Mrs. Smith so sad she does not specifically say, nor do many of the eighteenth-century Petrarchists. Sometimes it is sorrow of love or death which moves them, but more often it is the spirit of the times, melancholy itself, which they love to versify; which they love to mingle, like Petrarch, with descriptions of flowers, trees, twilight, and nightingales. A single example from Mrs. Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets* will, I am sure, suffice to illustrate her debt to the great Italian:

Again the wood and long-withdrawing vale  
 In many a tint of tender green are drest,  
 Where the young leaves, unfolding, scarce conceal,  
 Beneath their early shade, the half-form'd nest  
 Of finch or wood-lark; and the primrose pale,  
 And lavish cowslip, wildly scatter'd round,  
 Give their sweet spirits to the sighing gale.  
 Ah! season of delight!—could aught be found  
 To soothe awhile the tortur'd bosom's pain,  
 Of Sorrow's rankling shaft to cure the wound,  
 And bring life's first delusions once again,  
 'Twere surely met in thee:—thy prospects fair,  
 Thy notes of harmony, thy balmy air,  
 Have 'power to cure all sadness but despair.' }

Mrs. Smith's variation on the sonnet form is characteristic of the early imitators of Petrarch. Similarly, William Lisle Bowles' *Fourteen Sonnets, Written Chiefly on Picturesque Spots during a Tour* (1789, but partly composed earlier, and, as one of the first distinguished evidences of Petrarch's renascent influence, best considered here) forsake the strict Italian stanza form. Bowles, who took this tour to distract a lovelorn mind, often discovered himself wandering, like Petrarch, "solo e pensoso." Even among the bracing peaks of Switzerland he found that

Languid, and sad, and slow, from day to day  
 I journey on, yet pensive turn to view . . .  
 The streams, and vales, and hills, that steal away.

Nature either weeps with him or winks with that gaiety whose irony Petrarchists never tire of deploring:

How shall I meet thee, Summer, wont to fill  
 My heart with gladness when thy pleasant tide



First came, and on the Coomb's romantic side  
 Was heard the distant cuckoo's hollow bill!  
 Fresh flowers shall fringe the margin of the stream,  
 As with the songs of joyance and of hope  
 The hedge-rows shall ring loud, and on the slope  
 The poplars sparkle in the passing beam;  
 The shrubs and laurels that I lov'd to tend,<sup>18</sup>  
 Thinking their May-tide fragrance would delight,  
 With many a peaceful charm, thee, my poor friend,  
 Shall put forth their green shoots, and cheer the sight!  
 But I shall mark their hues with sadder eyes,  
 And weep the more for one who in the cold earth lies.

In these sonnets of Smith and Bowles the Italian lyrist, after a lapse of a hundred and fifty years, again became a moving, if not pulsing, force in English poetry.

This section may be best closed, I think, with a brief account of other Italian writers of lyric or short poems who came to English notice between 1770 and 1785. The most popular lyric poet after Petrarch was Metastasio, twenty-six of whose songs and sonnets were versified by Isola's students in 1778, and from whose *canzonette* and *cantate* young Mesurier gave four extensive renderings. As the shortest possible sample of Metastasio's middle-aged gracefulness—it no longer seems to move us as it did our ancestors—we may quote Mesurier's version of the last stanza of "La libertà," one of the most famous of the poems to Nice, the poet's mistress:

I from a fickle false one part;  
 You lose a faithful constant heart:  
 Which of us best the loss shall bear  
 I neither know nor care.  
 But love so true, I know,  
 Nice again will scarcely meet,  
 While ev'ry day can shew  
 Women her equals in deceit.

Of these *canzonette* to Nice, Edward Taylor, that unquenchable Irishman, did not hesitate to assert that "as long as simplicity,

<sup>18</sup> This pastime—in his case, at least, of allegorical significance—was a favorite with Petrarch.

elegance, unrivalled sweetness of language, and the most exquisite sensibility of soul are qualities to be esteemed in an author, so long will these poems be read and admired."<sup>14</sup> Time does not seem to have upheld his warm-hearted prediction.

Other contemporary poets (Metastasio died in 1782) to attract English attention were Lorenzo Pignotti and Giuseppe Parini. The former's *Favole e novelle* had editions (1782 and 1784) which, though probably printed in Paris, were largely intended for British readers. Pignotti, a professor of physics at Pisa, was a decided Anglophile, made many English friends, and did much with his poetry to convince northerners that the Tuscan muse was not extinct. Parini, a professor of literature at Milan, enjoyed an English translation of his satires, *Il mattino* and *Il mezzogiorno* (first published in 1763 and 1765). This version, though in turgid prose, was enough to suggest to Englishmen two things: first, that the modern Italian temper could be, when necessary, as sharp and austere as Dante's itself; second, that modern Italian poets could love their country and lament her degradation as much as Filicaja or Michelangelo. It is too bad that Lady Elizabeth Berkeley (at this time, Lady Craven), by translating her *Fashionable Day* (1780) with "the liberality of a freeborn Englishwoman," somewhat disfranchised the liberal spirit of Parini. "Poor soul!" said Parini, addressing the Roman fop of the midcentury. "How long, how tedious are thy days! Morning, noon, evening, night—with what cruelly slow and deliberate feet they creep one after the other!" Perhaps they would move faster if passed among objects rather sterner than perfumed handkerchiefs, teeth sponges, pomatums, and the "rose-red lips and the heaving bosom of the musical syren." Parini's satire is nearly all conveyed in terms of pungent irony, of which we may give a sample or two. Speaking of that minute when, about noon, this young savior of his degraded country manages to overcome Morpheus, Parini exclaims:

Oh that, in this glorious moment, could enter one of our ancient worthies of other times, Bayard, Tancred, or Rinaldo! such as they appeared when, their nodding helmets on their heads [and] shaking their ponderous lances, their loud and terrible voices cried,

<sup>14</sup> *Cursory Remarks on Tragedy* (1774).

"To arms!" and assembled their warriors at the dawn of day! They would immediately blush for shame at their unfashionable appearance. . .

As the fop completes his morning toilet, the poet supplicates:

Tutelarv Genius of Italy, thou whom the Gods have sent on earth to gather under the shadow of thy wings the race of modern heroes! With thine own hands present to him, whom I celebrate, his terrible sword. . . . How richly is its guard ornamented!

"Oh senseless Italy!" is his refrain, thus to squander your time and strength. Parini's satire, wherever read and understood, undoubtedly helped to swell the tide that was rising in England in favor of Italian character and independence.

Among the Renaissance or deceased poets of Italy, Pozzi (*Rime piacevoli*, 1776), Alamanni (*La coltivazione*, 1780), Tasso (*Canzoni amorose*, with the *Aminia*, 1780), Filicaia (*Poesie*, 1781), Redi (*Raccolta delle poesie*, 1781), Sannazzaro (*Rime*, with the *Arcadia*, 1781), Tansillo (*Poesie*, 1782), and Poliziano, Rucellai, Zappi, Maffei, and others (*Poesie di diversi autori*, 1782) enjoyed "Londra" editions. Though nearly all of these books were brought out in Leghorn, we must not forget that they were to some extent intended for British consumption: first, for the use of the English merchants in Leghorn itself; second, for the entertainment of the English colony at Florence; and last, for exportation to London. Their imprint, "Londra," is not entirely misleading; they are definitely a part of the story of Italian literature in England. Of these poets, the only one who seems to have attracted a considerable amount of attention in England was Filicaia. In *Poems* (1780) Gilbert Wakefield translated a sonnet, "On Providence," in which this power is represented as apportioning her rewards and denials with the always tender affection of a mother. More important were versions of two of his sonnets included in Mesurier's book of translations from Petrarch and Metastasio. Though this interesting volume also contained two or three sonnets each from Rota and Zappi, those from Filicaia were the most striking. One was the Tuscan senator's impressive paraphrase of Tasso's "Muoiono le città"; the other, the sonnet beginning, "Dov'è,

Italia, il tuo braccio?" Why Mesurier did not translate the more popular poem beginning, "Italia, Italia, o tu," I do not know. Had he done so, his would have been the first verse translation of this famous sonnet. In lieu of it, we may give the other:

Where, Italy, 's thy arm? or why seek'st thou  
 From others aid? Alike thy foe, if right  
 I deem, who guards thee, or who dares to fight;  
 Both once thy slaves, both would destroy thee now.  
 Thus dost thou prize what yet the fates allow  
 Of empire, thus that fame which shone so bright?  
 Thus to thine ancient Worth, which erst could plight  
 His troth to thee, preserv'st thou then thy vow?  
 Go then: that ancient Worth repudiate; take  
 Sloth and, 'midst blood and groans and clamours dread,  
 Sleep on, nor in thy utmost danger wake.  
 Sleep, vile adultress, till the murd'rous blade,  
 Vengeful, shall on thine idle slumbers break,  
 And pierce thee naked with thy minion laid.

With this energetic if clumsily translated sonnet we may close our short account of the reintroduction of Italian lyric poetry into England. When known and appreciated, it served two large purposes. First, it tempted English poets to develop and adorn their melancholy in the Petrarchan manner. Second, it tempted anyone fond of imitating its themes to sound the English lyre in behalf of Italian freedom.

MILES PETER ANDREWS, ROBERT JEPHSON, AND THE EARL OF  
 CARLISLE: ENGLISH DRAMA RETURNS TO THE ITALIAN  
 NOVELLE FOR INSPIRATION: 1778-1783

As we pursue our study of the resurrection of English interest in things Italian, especially literature, we sometimes get an eerie sense of history repeating itself. Huggins, with his translation of Ariosto, reminds us of Harington; Doynne, with his Tasso, of Fairfax. Charlotte Smith, Mary Robinson, and Sir Brooke Boothby often seem to incarnate the Petrarchists of the 1590's. In no respect is this curious duplication of the past more striking than in the spectacle of late eighteenth-century drama returning to the *novelle* of Boccaccio, Bandello, and others for lively plot and

colorful inspiration. One of the first Italian *novelle* ever to be turned into an English play was Boccaccio's story of Tancredi and Ghismonda, dramatized by Robert Wilmot (acted, 1568) and Sir Henry Wotton (written, 1586-87). Another favorite tale of the Elizabethan playwrights was Machiavelli's *Belfagor*, from which Haughton (?) took hints for *Grim, the Collier of Croydon* (licensed, 1600), Dekker for *If It Be Not Good, the Devil Is in It* (1612), and Ben Jonson for *The Diuell Is an Asse* (acted, 1616). Still another favorite *novella* plot was that of Bandello I, 20, according to which Shakespeare elaborated the false accusation of Hero in *Much Ado about Nothing* (1600). An analogue of this story, as told in the fifth canto of Ariosto, was also made into a play, *Ariodante and Geneuora* (acted, 1582/83). Now, with the revival of interest in Italian literature, the *novelle* again became popular. Grazzini, as we have seen, enjoyed an English edition in 1756; Boccaccio, in 1762, a triumph which was unostentatiously repeated in 1774. Almost immediately the three time-honored stories mentioned above began to reappear in English plays.

The first and least significant of these dramatizations was Miles Peter Andrews' comic opera on Machiavelli's story of the devil who was convinced by sad experience that the roasting of hell is preferable to the society of the most attractive wife on earth. The latest versions of *Belfagor* to appear in English, so far as I know, were those of Ellis Farnsworth<sup>15</sup> and Alexander Penne-cuik,<sup>16</sup> both published in 1762. In *Belphegor; or, The Wishes* (acted in 1778 though not published in full till 1788) Andrews took up the adventures of the fiend at that point where, ruined by his termagant wife's extravagance, he is forced to flee from his creditors. To the farmer who saves him from the police he offers, not, as in Machiavelli, the chance to make a fortune by exorcising a fiend from a princess—a scene difficult to represent—but three wishes. The last of these the farmer, after wasting the first two in the traditional manner, uses, at the advice of Belphegor himself, to restore to his wife that use of the tongue of which he has formerly deprived her. Before descending to hell Machiavelli's

<sup>15</sup> *The Works of Nicolas Machiavel.*

<sup>16</sup> *A Collection of Curious Scots Poems.*

devil is made so far to belie his original character as to give a sermon on the possibility of "domestic felicity, without which, [I] know from experience, there can be no happiness in life." We are prepared, indeed, for this about-face of Belphegor by his early assertion that "My disappointment shall not prejudice me against the female world, as I am convinced there are many who in every respect do honour to human nature. . ." This comic opera was performed in both London and Dublin.

Far weightier was Robert Jephson's "tragedy," *The Law of Lombardy* (1779), referable to Bandello I, 20 and II, 44, to the Ginevra-Ariodante story in Ariosto, and to Shakespeare. In Bandello II, 44 an English widow, the Duchess of Savoy, is falsely accused of adultery by an ambitious prime minister to whom, having plighted her heart to a handsome Spaniard, she refuses to yield her hand. According to the dreadful "law of Lombardy" her life now stands forfeit, unless a champion can successfully defend her against her accuser. Just in the nick of time, of course, the duchess's Spanish gallant arrives to save her. With this story Jephson combined I, 20, in which the rejected suitor throws guilt on the innocent girl by making her appear, her lover looking on, to admit a man to her bedchamber. Ariosto's tale of Ginevra and Ariodante offers, as we know, a combination of these stories, from which Jephson might have drawn his plot without recourse to Bandello. Ariosto, on the other hand, makes the dread decree against adultery a law of Scotland, and brings from Italy the gallant Ariodante to foil the machinations of Scottish Polinesso! Though Jephson drew heavily on Ariosto for his plot, it seems clear that he consulted Bandello too, either in the original or in some old English version. In Jephson the scene is laid in Pavia. The "proud, subtle, and pitiless" defamer of Lombardy's princess, Sophia, is made, of course, an Italian, Bireno, while her true love and savior is an Englishman, one Paladore. When Paladore learns from Sophia's maid, Alinda (Dalinda in Ariosto), that it was she, not her mistress, whom he had seen caressing Bireno in the moonlight, he, of course, flies to her rescue. The only character to die in this "tragedy" is Alinda, the woman-in-waiting. It had a good success when acted at Drury Lane.

The most interesting of these plays is, perhaps, the Earl of Carlisle's dramatization of Boccaccio IV, 1. This striking tale of unbridled passion and savage revenge seems to be one of the world's outstanding tragedies. Besides those treatments of the theme already mentioned, it was turned into verse by Dryden as "Sigismonda and Guiscardo" (1700) and again brought upon the stage by Mrs. Centlivre as *The Cruel Gift* (1717). In the original story, you remember, Tancredi, Prince of Salerno, moved by a selfish and even jealous affection for his widowed daughter, Ghismonda, flatly refuses to let her remarry. Ghismonda, angered by this violation of the "rights of nature" and stung with love for a base-born but noble-minded follower of the court, Guiscardo, admits him secretly to her bed. On discovering their intercourse the furious Tancredi orders the boy to be killed and his heart presented to his daughter in a golden goblet. After giving her father a stirring lecture on the cruelty of parents, Ghismonda pours poison over the heart and, to Tancredi's frantic chagrin, drinks her death from the fatal cup. The more unconventional of these incidents were considerably softened in Carlisle's tragedy, *The Father's Revenge* (1783). It is, for instance, Tancred's<sup>37</sup> commanding, not forbidding, Sigismonda—not a widow—to marry that precipitates the tragedy. Rather than wed the hateful Manfred, Prince of Benevento, she makes haste to secretly marry herself to Guiscard, a foundling, rescued from the sea when a baby by Tancred, and brought up with her from the cradle. Enraged at Sigismonda's disobedience and unworthy alliance, Tancred orders the supposedly base-born lover to be killed. Too late Guiscard turns out to be the rightful prince of Salerno, Tancred having usurped the boy's patrimony years before! Sigismonda dies of grief, and Tancred resigns his ill-gotten kingdom to Manfred of Benevento. Carlisle, following Boccaccio at least in part, plays up Tancred's excessive devotion to his daughter, making Guiscard say:

O! I have seen him sit and gaze upon her  
Till down his manly cheeks the scorching tears

<sup>37</sup> From here on I use Carlisle's versions of the Italian names. These seem to have been suggested, along with certain incidents, such as the marriage of Ghismonda and Guiscardo, by Dryden's treatment of the tale.

Have flow'd so fast that on his iron corselet  
Were mark'd their rusty channels.

At sight of the lovers kissing, Tancred is struck with an unnatural repugnance:

What—in my sight!—O! horror, guilt, and shame!  
What, not restrain your strong libidinous wills,  
But, in the presence of the conscious day,  
Imbrute!

The language of all the characters is screwed to a similar pitch of bombast, even that of the modest Sigismonda, who describes Guiscard as follows:

Is he not all that Heathen fiction drew?  
For, let him snatch the silver lyre and bow,  
O, he is lovely as the God of Day.  
If thou would'st view the wondrous charms that caused  
The wife of Theseus to forget her woe,  
Bid Guiscard round his ruddy temples twine  
The vine's curl'd tendril.

The only cause of this terrible tragedy was, says Guiscard, love—

Love, that so long has torn this restless planet,—  
Love, in whose cause oceans of blood have flow'd,  
And ne'er shall cease to stream while man retains  
His form, an image of his God, and keeps  
One atom of his heavenly nature perfect.

If my readers do not admire these verses of Carlisle, let them remember that his poetry was praised by two such distinguished critics as Horace Walpole and Dr. Johnson. They are the brightest sparks that the Italian *novelle* were able to strike from English poetry in the eighteenth century. Admittedly, we cannot compare the effects to those wrought in Elizabethan times. Still, seen as history, all sorts of facts take on significance and even color. A person who has learned to find a world in a grain of sand cannot fail to enjoy himself in a desert. In connection with the growing popularity of the *novelle*, we may mention two or three translations of more ambitious Italian fiction. From the contemporary Italian novel I find two renderings, both from Pietro Chiari



and both made, apparently, in the year 1771: *Rosara; or, The Adventures of an Actress*, and *The Generous Lover; or, The Adventures of the Marchioness de Brianville*. A seventeenth-century Biblical romance, Giovanni Francesco Loredano's *Adamo*, was newly<sup>18</sup> translated by Richard Murray (1779). We may also mention Carlo Amici's *Lettere di Gustavo, colle risposte d'Emilia, sua amante*, published in London in 1782.

DR. JOHN MOORE AND OTHERS: ITALIAN CHARACTER AND  
HISTORY FURTHER ILLUMINATED: 1781  
AND THEREABOUT

Though Lady Miller, Patrick Brydone, and Dr. Burney found many pleasant things to say about Italian character, as we have seen, it was not until the tour of Dr. John Moore that the British discovered Italians to be every bit as wonderful as Baretti had said. Moore, a Scottish physician, is best remembered as the father of the hero of *Corunna* and the author of *Zeluco*, a novel. As a traveller, he pretended to great urbanity and Continental-mindedness. According to his portrait he seems to have been heavy-set and bull-necked, in these respects resembling Dr. Johnson and Baretti, whose *Manners and Customs* he seems always to have had in mind when writing his travel impressions. Moore's *View of Society and Manners in Italy: with Anecdotes Relating to Some Eminent Characters* (1781), besides corroborating Baretti's opinion of the Italian temper at every point, brought to English attention a number of colorful stories culled from Venetian history. These in themselves are important enough to rank Moore among the foremost "historical travellers," side by side with the Earl of Cork and Orrery. With my discussion of Moore's book I shall interweave some odds and ends of similar opinion and information about Italy which came to light between 1777 and 1785. The fact that quite a lot of dissimilar or reactionary opinion about Italian character continued common in these days forces us to omit certain literary travellers, some of them rather distinguished, from the present discussion. These include George Edward Ayscough (*Letters from an Officer in the Guards*, 1778), Martin Sherlock (*Letters*

<sup>18</sup> First translated by J. S. as *The Life of Adam* (1659).

*from an English Traveller*, translated from the French by John Duncombe, 1780; *New Letters from an English Traveller*, translated from the French by the author himself, 1781; and *Original Letters on Several Subjects*, 1781), William Beckford (*Dreams, Waking Thoughts, and Incidents; in a Series of Letters from Various Parts of Europe*, 1783), Henry Swinburne (*Travels in the Two Sicilies*, 1783-85), Mary Berry (who kept a *Journal* in Italy in 1783-84), and Benjamin Hobhouse (*Remarks on Several Parts of France and Italy, Ec. in the Years 1783, 1784, and 1785, 1796*).

Just how thoroughly Moore had learned the lesson taught by Baretti is made abundantly plain by his belief that "the Italians seem to have more sensibility than any people I am acquainted with. . ." From this axiomatic statement it followed, like a corollary, that Italians can do very little wrong. The lower classes, said Moore, have been maligned; the upper, misunderstood. The first are neither murderous nor lazy by nature; the second, neither cold, discourteous, nor adulterous. Though he could not repress a smile at Catholic processions and relic-worship, Moore admitted that these too had their place in a sentimental scheme of things. He found the poor of the great cities, especially those of Naples—so often called the scum of the earth—open, ardent, enthusiastic, and industrious. They will never desert distress of any kind, he said, whether in their relatives, friends, or the hunted or sick who have no claim upon them. In Rome an English painter told Moore that in contrast to English prostitutes, who usually "become quite abandoned, and forget all sense of gratitude and affection," Italian "women who sell their favors for money . . . display a goodness of character in other respects, and continue their duty and attachment to their parents as long as they live. . ." The broad-minded doctor devoted a whole letter to showing "that the treacherous and perfidious disposition imputed to the Italians is, like most other national reflections, ill-founded. . ." Stiffen the laws, he said, abolish asylums for murderers, stop cardinals from commuting death sentences, and the Italians will turn out less fierce assassins than the men of other nations. He pointed out how Leopold's reforms in Tuscany had "totally put a stop to the use of

the stiletto" and eradicated overnight what had been long supposed to be a national characteristic. Remember, he said, that the *vin du pays* of the Neapolitans, a people long slandered as licentious, seditious, and murderous, is iced lemonade. "If these poor fellows are idle, it is not their fault; they are continually running about the streets, as we are told of the artificers of China, offering their services and begging for employment. . ."

As for the upper classes, their morals and manners have long been misunderstood in England, partly because of French misrepresentation, partly because of English stupidity. The frozen formality and gesticulating pomp supposed to characterize their behavior are without basis in fact. "In their external deportment the Italians have a grave solemnity of manner, which is sometimes thought to arise from a natural gloominess of disposition." But it is probably the French who invented this explanation, they being the nation above all others inclined "to impute to melancholy the sedate serious air which accompanies reflection." The French have likewise misunderstood Italian vivacity, so different from theirs—"the former proceeds from sensibility, the latter from animal spirits." Both Italian gravity and Italian gaiety—in a word, Italian manners—are simply the sign language of a frankly tender heart. If not only Frenchmen, but Englishmen themselves, have seldom felt at ease with Italians, it has been because they do not understand simple candor and unaffected behavior. As for cicisbeism, we must not give that institution the interpretation it would undoubtedly deserve, did it prevail in France or England. Such amorous levity and inconstancy as is famous in France is entirely out of tune with the fundamental sobriety, gravity, and tenderness of the Italian nature. With Baretti, Moore agreed in believing that the Italians of the past, and often those of the present, have been able "by the mere force of imagination and the eloquence of their own metaphysical sonnets" to persuade themselves that women possess inestimable virtues of mind and body. Italian husbands, said he, have taken advantage of this national trait of reverence for women to wipe out the charge of jealousy often laid upon them. Thus they are accustomed to ask "a friend whom they trust" to escort their wives abroad for two or three hours a day. If some of these

"platonie admirers" happen to act "with less seraphic ends," it merely shows "the husbands . . . mistaken in their men. . ." The trouble with Englishmen, concluded Moore, is that they cannot understand how males can pass so much of their time with females. They should remember that Italians do not have the good fortune to be able to meddle with politics, and are unaccustomed to the hard hunting, drinking, and gaming which go on in England. Italians will tell you that "though the intimacy should never exceed the limits of friendship, there is something more flattering and agreeable in it than in male friendships; that they find the female heart more sincere, less interested, and warmer in its attachments. . ." In a word, the Italians have mastered a form of sensibility which may well stagger a northern imagination.

The great calumnies of murder and immorality being now wiped from Italian brows, Dr. Moore proceeded to make an excuse for Italian superstition. He averred that the Italians' love of processions is merely an instance of the "sedate sensibility" which enables them to take a "luxurious" delight in even the simplest sources of enjoyment. These processions have, in addition, a very obvious use for, "besides amusing and comforting the people," they "serve to fill up their time, and prevent that ennui and those immoral practices which are apt to accompany poverty and idleness." It would be impolitic, as well as unkind, for rulers to deprive the people of "such superstitious ceremonies as awaken the future hopes, without lulling the present benevolence, of the multitude. . ." Moore pointed to the great social welfare work carried on by the Catholic Church, and summoned English travellers to forget the supposititious debaucheries of Italian priests and nuns in the sight of them at their chosen task of consolation among the miserable.

In this connection let me notice a tiny English novel, *Letters of an Italian Nun and an English Gentleman* (1781), as characteristic of the changed spirit of the times. This popular book, apparently written by William Combe, was said to have been "translated from the French of J. J. Rousseau." It is a reproof to those English travellers who customarily visited nunneries only in order to pity the poor victims, tempt them to hate their parents, and break their

hearts with the sight of a well-turned English leg. In Combe's novel an English gentleman is represented as seeking to seduce a nun with sighs and Protestant objections to that imprisonment which excludes a beautiful girl from the natural "pleasures and honour of life; which is the offspring of abominable policy and gloomy superstition. . ." The sensitive Isabella, fearing that the Englishman may die, as he momentarily threatens to do, finally consents to forsake her nunnery, follow him to England, and there, when he has gained the full consent of his parents, marry him. When, having lured her to London under false pretences, Mr. Croli hires a pandar to help him seduce her, Isabella learns how false and licentious an English gentleman can be! Convinced of his hopeless perfidy, she resolves to return to Naples where, unknown, she can live a life of well-doing with a competence she enjoys. To her lover she writes that "a resolution awakened by wounded honour, as well as injured love, will find resources that cannot enter into your comprehension. Revenge does not belong to my nature, and I have loved you with the noble, disinterested passion which forbids me to wish that any ill may befall you; but I shall support the dignity of my character to the last; and though the world may look cool upon me, I possess the means of preserving myself from my own reproach." To Mr. Croli's mother she writes that though he were now to beg her to marry him, and even set his venerable parents on the task of supplication, she would never have him. "The insult he has offered me has rendered him unworthy of me; and there is no misery I would not suffer with pleasure rather than be united to a man who has harboured the intention to injure my honour. . ." In this case it was Lovelace who failed and retrieved his fault by suicide. The Italian Clarissa preserved her honor in triumph and passed her last years happily in another convent. Incidentally her triumph was that of Italian Catholics in general. British scorn of their so-called superstition was shown to be thoughtless, selfish, and even base.

"Superstitious slaves" was clearly a phrase that would have to be amended. Italian sensibility took the sting out of superstition and made a slavish attitude of mind impossible. Captivity is one of the first repugnances of the sensitive heart. It is therefore wrong to

think of Italians as cravenly submitting to their tyrants. Sensibility makes them smile bravely through their sorrow, but a cheerful face is, let us hope, no index to a cowardly heart. The Italians languish for freedom. They even dream of unifying their whole peninsula into a great nation natively governed. Dr. Moore did not dwell on these points, but he distinctly made them. It mattered not to him that Leopold of Tuscany and his famous brother, Joseph II, who personally superintended the Milanese, were among the most "enlightened" despots in Europe. In one respect, at least, they were just as bad as the lazy, sporting Ferdinand of Naples: they exercised the power of life and death over subjects who had no voice whatever in framing the laws that governed them. Unlike the pope or the arbitrary senators of Venice or Genoa, they were not even Italian by birth. Of all these "foreign despots" it was, however, Ferdinand of Naples who offered the easiest mark for satire. Thinking to take "a becoming share in the afflictions of a royal bosom," Dr. Moore sorrowed with Ferdinand over the fact that he had killed "no more than eighty birds in a day. . ." The anonymous author of *The Travellers, a Satire* (1778) did not hesitate to accuse this monarch of cheating, through the Duke of O-b-i, at cards. How could you, says he, addressing a certain "A-s-n," forget your English virtue,

[And], dup'd at Naples, give thy guineas wing,  
When foully won, tho' even to their King?

This satire is significant as showing the increased respect which the British were beginning to pay the native Italian governments, as contrasted with those controlled by foreigners. We are given to understand that the senates of Genoa, Venice, and even little Lucca deserve esteem for being at least indigenous. Never again let young Englishmen urinate, as once in scorn, upon the legislature of Lucca:

That day remember, when the fatal stream  
Pour'd upon Lucca's Senators:—a theme  
Which thro' thy land thy ignominy bears,  
Still rings thy folly thro' Italia's ears.

As early as 1771 Hugh Kelly in a semihistorical play had praised the Venetians' devotion to the remnants of their liberty, making

their noble doge, Anselmo, resent all foreign attempts to "subvert our glorious constitution," and refuse an offer of hereditary power with the words:

I scorn the kingdom that can court a tyrant,  
And while I live my country shall be free. . .

Nor could the British in these days think much ill of the state or country which had produced such a ruler as Clement XIV (1769-74). Latterly the pontiff who abolished the Jesuits had been popularized by a *Life* (1776) and *Interesting Letters* (1777), written by Caraccioli and translated, the latter possibly by John Cleland, from the French. These show that "It is an act of the greatest injustice to accuse the Italians of knowing nothing but superstitious devotions." In the *Letters*, supposed to have been written by himself, Clement abandons scholasticism for social service, advocates a return to the Bible for doctrines and sermons, and finds interesting reading in Newton and Berkeley! Everywhere he glows with the sensibility of a man who grew eloquent only when his fellow creatures fell upon misfortune—"then my heart, soul, and mind speak at once." Though Charles Plowden's (?) *Candid and Impartial Sketch of the Life and Government of Clement XIV* (1785) may have slightly damaged Caraccioli's hero, liberal Britons united in lamenting the untimely death of this promising leader. While the contemporary history of Italy did not furnish any great Italian generals or statesmen on whom a sympathetic traveller like Moore could pin his faith in Italian regeneration, he sensed in the people abilities which needed only freedom and unification to bring them to the surface. The apathy of ages hung at their hearts, but it could not drag them down. Moore reëchoed Baretti's hopes of his native land, saying, "[Were] the whole peninsula united in one State, it would again resume its superiority over other nations." When one recalls the intense national superiority and pride which characterized the British of the day, the implied humility and good will of the urbane doctor are staggering.

Besides doing so much to popularize the sentimental interpretation of Italian character—his *View* enjoyed six editions by 1795—Dr. Moore made the chief events of Venetian history available to English readers in an attractive, simplified form. Those historical figures on which he dwelt at most length were conspirators and

patriots. Of the former he had a low opinion except when, like Tiepolo and his unsuccessful fellow plotters against a fourteenth-century doge who had "completely annihilated the ancient rights of the people," they had acted from republican motives. For Marino Faliero and the Marquis of Bedmar, both of whom would have exposed the beautiful city to fire and sword merely to gratify base passions of resentment or ambition, he felt nothing but aversion. Bedmar's conspiracy being familiar to all readers of *Venice Preserv'd*, we may take this opportunity to outline the tragedy which, apparently introduced to English readers by Moore, was later to inspire a famous romantic drama. Many an eighteenth-century traveller had stood awe-struck before an ominous black board in the Ducal Palace at Venice, but none that I know of, with the possible exception of John Durant Breval (*Remarks on Several Parts of Europe*, 1726), had ever troubled to discover the facts of the story. In these facts Moore, perhaps unfortunately, saw nothing but the peevish rancor of a jealous old man. "If ambition, or the augmentation of his own power, had been the object, it would not have been so surprising; but his motive to the conspiracy was as small as the intention was dreadful." At eighty Faliero had married a young wife. When she complained that a young nobleman had insulted her, he determined to give her ample satisfaction. The senators not taking his grievance seriously, his wrath was turned on them. By entering into a conspiracy with the Admiral of the Arsenal, he arranged "to massacre the whole Grand Council." "Such a scene of bloodshed on account of one woman," observed the doctor, "has not been imagined since the Trojan war." Moore was glad to report that though the plot was conducted with more secrecy than could have been expected from a man apparently "deprived of reason, as well as humanity," it was discovered by the anxiety of one of the conspirators to save the life of Niccolò Lioni. Lioni had the man seized and threats made him disclose "his horrid mystery." Faliero was beheaded (1355) and his infamous place among the portrait-honored doges symbolized by a black board or, later, blank space. Since Moore found that "every sentiment of compassion is effaced by horror at the enormity of the crime," it is not surprising that the dramatic possibilities of the tale lay long neglected.

To the "romantic story" of the patriot, Enrico Dandolo, Moore



devoted a whole letter, tracing his services to his country from their insignificant origins to the day when, past eighty years of age and "almost entirely deprived of his sight," he personally conducted his countrymen to victory as, united with the French, they besieged Constantinople. "Though the star of Dandolo rose in obscurity, and shone with no extraordinary lustre at its meridian height, yet nothing ever surpassed the brilliancy of its setting rays. . . The annals of mankind present nothing more worthy of our admiration." Another Venetian patriot whom Dr. Moore seems to have introduced to English poets and dramatists like Byron, Rogers, and Mitford was Iacopo Foscari. Even if not in the usual way, this young hero died for his country. Son of the Doge of Venice, he was accused of murder. Under the eyes of his own father he was tortured and condemned to pass his entire life in banishment on the island of Candia. But "this unfortunate youth bore his exile with more impatience than he had done the rack. . ." When all hope of having his sentence commuted disappeared, the homesick man deliberately provoked the dreadful Council of Ten by corresponding with the Duke of Milan. Recalled and tried for treason, he boldly confessed that he had broken the law as "the only means he had in his power of seeing his parents and friends; a pleasure he was willing to purchase at the expense of any danger or pain." He could not, as a matter of fact, stand continued exile from the land he loved so well. Just when his old father was on the point of getting him recalled from a second banishment, news came from Candia that a broken heart had released him from "dejection worse than death." Soon after, a dying noble confessed to the murder of which Foscari had stood accused. But since the doge had not lived to see his family honor exculpated, "the ways of heaven never appeared more dark and intricate than in the incidents and catastrophe of this mournful story." Sir James Edward Smith, describing Moore's book of Italian travel in 1793,<sup>10</sup> observed that "the anecdotes of Venetian history are highly interesting. Who has not dropped a tear over the story of Foscari?"

In addition to Dr. Moore, one or two other writers of the time threw glints of light on Italian history. In his *Travels in the Two*

<sup>10</sup> In a *Sketch of a Tour on the Continent*.

*Sicilies* (1783-85) Henry Swinburne included short sketches of the history of Naples and Sicily. These, however, brought forth little or none of the drama inherent in the careers of Manfred, Conradin, Giovanni da Procida, or Giovanna I. Henry Boyd's "Historical Essay of the State of Affairs in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries, with Respect to the History of Florence," prefixed to his translation of Dante's *Inferno* (1785), was an attempt to vindicate the political characters of some of the old popes so roundly denounced by Dante. Boyd admitted that they had been the firebrands of Europe. But the upshot of the whole medieval struggle between the popes and the emperor had been simply this: "whether the Pope should have the whole ecclesiastical affairs of Germany at his disposal, or the Emperor annihilate the liberty of Italy." And he decided, like a humanitarian *philosophe*, that the freedom of the Italian republics, fostering the growth of the arts and sciences, had been well worth a mass. Even a Boniface VIII could be celebrated by English poets, if they so desired, as a lover of that country in whose past glories England was growing steadily more interested. Writers like Hugh Kelly (*Clementina*, 1771) and Joseph Holden Pott (*Selmane*, 1782) used a vague background of Italian history in their plays. The latter probably had in mind Giovanni Francesco Gonzaga, fourth Marquis of Mantua, when he sent two young Italians to a Gonzaga ruler

To aid his arms, and learn when Mantua fought  
The duties of the field. . .

HENRY BOYD, CHARLES ROGERS, WILLIAM HAYLEY, HOOLE,  
AND OTHERS: DANTE AND ARIOSTO SCORE THEIR  
FIRST REAL TRIUMPHS: 1780-1785

The growing popularity of Italian literature, as it concerned Ariosto and Dante, reached a kind of climax in the years from 1780 to 1785, which saw two new translations of both the *Orlando* and the *Inferno*, the latter being the first considerable versions of Dante's poem to be printed. We must remember, of course, that the growing popularity of Italian literature in these days is not to be measured only in terms of translations and printed criticism. The truest gauge would probably be found in the increasing num-

ber of Englishmen who wished to read Italian poems in the original. Actual figures are, of course, very difficult to obtain. This we may say: that the number of Italian masters who published grammars, readers, and dictionaries at least doubled after 1770. Formerly Baretti, Martinelli, and Palermo seem to have monopolized the publishing, if not the teaching, field. After 1770 a number of new pretenders appeared, including Agostino Isola, F. Bottarelli, Francesco Sastres, Giuseppe A. Graglia, and Giovanni Povoleri. Isola, as we know, taught at Cambridge; Sastres, at Bath; the rest, in London. To the pair of grammars published before 1770 by Baretti and Palermo there were now added three new ones: the first by Sastres (about 1775), the second translated from Veneroni, probably by Bottarelli (1778), and the third by Povoleri (1779). When we have added to these a series of exercise books by Isola (1774), Baretti (1775), Bottarelli (1778), and Palermo (1779), and a *New Italian, English, and French Pocket Dictionary* (1777) by Bottarelli, we have quite considerable proof of the growth of English interest in the language itself. The growth of literary appreciation cannot be measured so simply.

In spite of Huggins and the abortive translator of 1774, it remained true in 1780 that Ariosto had not yet made for himself that definite place in the English literary imagination which had been granted Tasso after the appearance of the translations by Doyne and Hoole. About 1779-80, however, Henry Boyd translated the *Orlando* into Spenserian stanzas, while Hoole, in 1783, finished a version in heroic couplets which, pleasing the still rather conservative taste of the times, may be said to have definitely brought Ariosto home to British bosoms.

Henry Boyd, an Irishman, seems to have been the humble incumbent of Killeigh, near Tullamore, when he began what was really a long and honorable career as a translator and popularizer of Italian poetry, worthy to rank him beside Hoole himself. Domiciled in the wilds of Ireland, he appears to have diverted himself and at the same time tried to improve his prospects of preferment by translating Ariosto and Dante. It seems only appropriate that a native of Spenser's adoptive country should have been, apparently, the first to turn the *Orlando* into that poet's famous

stanza. Boyd was not a literal translator. He had a trying way of curtailing his original in spots that did not appeal to him, and expanding parts he liked with large gifts of what he called "characteristic imagery." His compression of so-called pleonastic sentiments in the *Orlando*<sup>20</sup> he excused as attempts to "add to its poetical effect. . ." As for the licentious passages of his poet, the Irish curate showed himself still "more hardy" in wielding the pruning knife—"they are all either altered, or entirely omitted, in the entire translation. . ."

Only a bit of this translation, apparently completed about 1780, ever saw the light. This excerpt, though called "The Story of Zerbino and Isabella," really depicts Orlando's madness, Isabella's pathetic tale being used, as in the original, to furnish relief from the hero's extravagant rage. It was published in 1785, along with Boyd's translation of the *Inferno*, as *A Specimen of a New Translation of the Orlando Furioso*, "which has been finished some years." The rest was never "called for." Boyd, as a matter of fact, had lost his chance. Isolated in Ireland, he had let Hoole get his version of Ariosto before the public first. Even if he had published earlier, I doubt whether his translation would have been a success. The Spenserian stanza, still treated as something of a toy in those days, was hardly calculated to put Ariosto on the shelf beside the favorite versions of Homer and Virgil. Even to a modern taste Hoole's conventional couplets will probably seem preferable to Boyd's turgid Spenserians.

Old Huggins himself sometimes did better than Boyd, as may be seen by comparing the following stanza with its fellow in the older translation:

RETIRE in time! and disengage your wings,  
 Ye careless crew, that sink in Cupid's toils!  
 For bondage, lunacy, and death he brings,  
 And of his nobler self the lover spoils;  
 Not all, like ROLAND's mind, the GOD embroils;  
 Yet, less or more, the unresisted spell  
 Of reason's aid the wretched youth beguiles,  
 And whips, and straining cords, and darken'd cell  
 The Maniac best become, his moody rage to quell.

<sup>20</sup> To keep in harmony with my authors I use *Orlando* instead of *Furioso*.

Such translation is, at the closest, no more than paraphrasing. And this kind of paraphrasing, straining always in the direction of hyperbole, does not really suit Ariosto. Its lush, fruity quality would better have become Tasso. Boyd had an ideal of proper "poetic language," distinctly florid and Hibernian. To well-pruned Ariosto and cryptic Dante it could sometimes be applied only with tiresome or ludicrous results. He was perhaps at his best when his text gave him some excuse for exaggeration. Of Orlando, dragging his dead horse hither and yon in naked fury, he wrote:

He drew his lumber on, and ravag'd all,  
Hamlet or town, where'er he chanc'd to come:  
The plunder'd village felt his hunger's call,  
And gave their hoards to fill his giant womb;  
Their sheep, their oxen, found a living tomb. . .

Nor was Boyd entirely unhappy in describing the death of Zerbino, rocked in Isabella's arms and comforted by her last promise:

Her lips to his the lovely maid declin'd,  
And wash'd his clay-cold cheek with bursting woe,  
Like some sweet drooping flow'ret left behind,  
The cruel rigours of the north to know.  
"Was this your love, to seek the shades below,  
And leave me here?" return'd the weeping maid;  
"Then hear your ISABELLA's latest vow:  
Never to leave your side, alive or dead,  
But follow to the grave, or Hell's profounder shade."

How Isabella managed to trick Rodomonte, the would-be violator, into killing her won equal praise from Boyd and his original:

Peace to her soul! that found a way so rare  
To save from taint her pure unsullied name;  
That kept her chastity with cautious care,  
And Hermit virtue, now of slender fame:  
So may the favour'd *Tuscan* Muse proclaim  
The bright example down from age to age,  
As here I vow to sing the peerless dame,  
And deck with ev'ry charm the glowing page,  
For centuries to come her sisters to engage.

We have no reason to lament, I think, that the Irishman's translation was never published in full.

Before the appearance of Hoole's *Orlando* in 1783, a "Londra" edition of Ariosto was published in Leghorn (1781), and two rather significant steps forward in Ariosto criticism had occurred. The first of these was Voltaire's public recantation of his earlier scorn of the poet;<sup>21</sup> the second, a long sheaf of commendatory verses in William Hayley's *Essay on Epic Poetry* (1782). These works combined, I believe, not only to abolish the taunt of "romancer" but to place Ariosto, once for all, in the rank of the world's great epic poets. From Voltaire's retraction, as translated by Hoole in the preface to his *Orlando*, we may quote the following lines. After declaring that "The Orlando Furioso is at once the Iliad, the Odyssey, and the Don Quixote," Voltaire goes on to say:

The Orlando Furioso has a merit altogether unknown to the writers of antiquity, which merit is exhibited in the openings of the several cantos. Each canto is an enchanted palace, the vestibule of which is always in a different style, sometimes majestic, sometimes simple, and sometimes grotesque. The poet is, by turns, moral, pleasant, and gallant, but never departs from truth and nature. . . .

. . . [T]he greatest art of the poet appears in his interesting us so strongly for his heroes and heroines, though they are so many and various; the pathetic incidents in his poem are almost equal in number to the grotesque adventures; and his reader is so pleasingly accustomed to this mixture that the change steals upon him with the least seeming violence. . . .

I formerly durst not rank in the number of epic poets one whom at that time I considered as only the first of grotesque writers; but upon a more diligent perusal, I have found him to be as full of sublimity as pleasantry, and now make him this public reparation.

This unmitigated praise was too strong for even an old defender of Italian literature like Joseph Warton, who took occasion to censure it in the later editions of his *Essay on . . . Pope*, augmented

<sup>21</sup> See the article on epic poetry in *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie* (1770-71).

by a second volume in 1782. For the hero-worship of William Hayley, the friend of Cowper and Blake, it was, on the other hand, hardly strong enough. Hayley seems to have learned his love of the Italian poets from Isola when a student at Cambridge. Though Byron averred that

His style in youth or age is still the same,  
Forever feeble and forever tame,

Hayley enjoyed a popularity in his day which, in the case of his *Essay on Epic Poetry*, did good service to the Italians. "Indignant Fancy," said Hayley, angry at the "sleepy honours to proud System paid," resolved to prove her superiority to the latter by creating Ariosto:

From Necromancy's hand, in happiest hour,  
She caught the rod of visionary power;  
And, as aloft the magic wand she rais'd,  
A peerless Bard with new effulgence blaz'd,  
Born every law of System to disown,  
And rule by Fancy's boundless power alone.  
High in mid air, between the moon and earth,  
The Bard of pathos now, and now of mirth,  
Pois'd with his lyre between a griffin's wings,  
Her sportive darling, Ariosto sings.

By "Variety's supreme controul" he holds every reader as rapt as

the fond infant, in whose tender brain  
Young Sensibility delights to reign,  
While rapid Joy and Pain each other chase  
Through the soft muscles of its April face.  
In vain the slaves of System would discard  
From Glory's classic train this airy bard;  
Delighted Nature her gay favourite crown'd,  
And Envy's clamour in her plaudit drown'd.

As for Hoole himself, he allowed that Ariosto's lack of unity of action might still offend a few readers, and based his whole defense of him on his "powerfully delineated" characters and his truth to the "affections." Hoole's old-fashioned worry about the multiplicity of episodes led him in the third edition (1791)

to reduce the whole into twenty-four books, in which each story was followed to its conclusion before another was taken up. This clumsy device he abandoned, fortunately, in later editions, which reached the number of six by 1810. As in the case of Tasso, it was really Hoole who gave Ariosto genuine currency and even popularity in England. His translating was dull and uninspired, but it did the thing it was meant to do—it pleased a wide reading public, and initiated it by way of the familiar couplet into exotic worlds from which it had long shied like a stubborn and graceless, if well-bred, horse. One or two samples of Hoole's translating will amply suffice us. Ariosto's power of description was thought to be well exemplified in the picture of Alcina:

Bound in a knot behind, her ringlets roll'd  
Down her soft neck, and seem'd like waving gold.  
Her cheeks with lilies mix the blushing rose;  
Her forehead high, like polish'd iv'ry shows.  
Beneath two arching brows with splendor shone  
Her sparkling eyes, each eye a radiant sun!  
Here artful glances, winning looks appear,  
And wanton Cupid lies in willing ambush here:  
'Tis hence he bends his bow, he points his dart,  
'Tis hence he steals th' unwary gazer's heart.

It was not in Hoole's translation, we must remember, that Lessing found the cupid he admired. As an example of Ariosto's ironical wisdom, we may give the passage already quoted from Huggins and Boyd:

Whoe'er his feet on Cupid's snares shall set  
Must seek t' escape ere in th' entangling net  
His wings are caught, for sage experience tells,  
In love's extreme, extreme of madness dwells.  
Though each may rage not with the wild excess  
Orlando rag'd, their frenzy all express  
By different ways—what more our folly shows  
Than, while we others seek, ourselves to lose?

In the account of Olimpia deserted, Ariosto makes the still half-sleeping girl stretch both her arms and her legs in search of her ungrateful lover. Indelicacies like these legs, as well as the more



distinctly sensual passages throughout the poem, Hoole carefully omitted. He by no means equalled Huggins, I think, in his description of that melancholy morning when Olimpia slept

Till from her golden wheels Aurora thréw  
On verdant meads the drops of sparkling dew,  
And on the margin of the wavy flood  
Alcyone her ancient plaints renew'd. . .

With the pathetic episode of Zerbino and Isabella he did rather better, specially when he told how, "lowly bending o'er,"

Close to his mouth her trembling lips she laid,  
His mouth now pale like some fair rose decay'd:  
A vernal rose, that, cropt before its time,  
Bends the green stalk, and withers ere its prime.  
"Think not," she said, "life of my breaking heart!  
Without thy Isabella to depart: . . .  
One hour to both shall like dismissal give,  
Shall fix our doom, in future worlds to live; . . .  
Or, should I still survive that stroke of grief,  
At least thy sword will yield a sure relief."

It was in this garb, then, and during the early 1780's, that Ariosto once more assumed a high place in the English imagination and again became a force in English literature.

These were also the days of Dante's first important English triumphs, not so solid as Ariosto's, but significant. First of all, there was a Leghorn edition of the *Divina commedia* bearing the imprint of London (1778), the first thing of its kind. Then, in the third volume of his *History of English Poetry* (1781), Thomas Warton gave what he called "a general view" of the *Commedia*, in which he recounted many striking episodes from the *Inferno*, a few from the *Purgatorio*, and none from the *Paradiso*. In the original Italian he quoted numerous passages, dwelling with special fondness on the episodes of Francesca and Ugolino, the latter of which he turned, like his brother and Baretti before him, into prose. While his attitude toward Dante was in some respects as old-fashioned as his earlier view of Ariosto, he admitted that "the grossest improprieties of this poem discover an originality of invention, and its

absurdities often border on sublimity." After Warton came Hayley with imitations of Dante in his *Triumphs of Temper*<sup>22</sup> (1781) and unstinted praise in his *Essay on Epic Poetry* (1782). In the notes to this latter he included a *terza rima* translation of the first three cantos of the *Inferno*, which, appearing just before Charles Rogers' version of the *Inferno* (1782), may claim the honor of being the first considerable translation from Dante to see the light. Finally, came the pair of translations of the *Inferno* by Rogers and Boyd which, as I said above, gave the poem a certain amount of currency in England.

To Dante, Hayley devotes even more lines of his *Essay* than to Ariosto himself, the fewest going, significantly, to Tasso. He does not wholly approve of the bard, but he can go farther in his praise than the ex-Professor of Poetry at Oxford:

At length, fair Italy, luxuriant land,  
Where Art's rich flowers in earliest bloom expand,  
Thy daring DANTE his wild Vision sung,  
And raised to Epic pomp his native Tongue. . . .  
See the bold Bard now sink and now ascend,  
Wherever thought can pierce or life extend,  
In his wide circuit from Hell's drear abyss  
Thro' purifying scenes to realms of perfect bliss. . .

Like other people of his time, however, Hayley seems to have tracked Dante's steps very little beyond the bounds of hell. Like most, he lays special stress on the Francesca and Ugolino episodes, calling the latter "A tale unrivall'd by the Grecian Muse." He admits that Dante's genius was sometimes led astray by "Satiric Fury," "Quaint Conceit," or "Priestly Dullness," concluding:

Unequal Spirit! In thy various strain,  
With all their influence, Light and Darkness reign, . . .  
Extremes of Harmony and Discord dwell,  
The Seraph's music and the Demon's yell! . . .  
Thy failings sprung from thy disastrous time;  
Thy stronger Beauties from a soul sublime,  
Whose vigor burst, like the volcano's flame,  
From central darkness to the sphere of fame.

<sup>22</sup> This likewise contained some "touches of the sportive Ariosto."

From Hayley's notes to the *Essay* we may quote a sample of his *terza rima* translation. Beatrice sends Virgil to succor Dante:

"My friend, whose love all base desire surpast,  
 In yon drear desert finds his passage barr'd,  
 And, compass'd round with terrors, stands aghast;  
 And much I fear, beset with dangers hard,  
 He may be lost beyond all friendly reach,  
 And I from heaven descend too late a guard.  
 But go! and with thy soft soul-soothing speech,  
 And all the aid thy wisdom may inspire,  
 The ways of safety to this wanderer teach!  
 My name is Beatrice: the heavenly quire  
 For this I left, tho' ever left with pain;  
 But love suggested what I now desire."

Hayley also included in his notes a short biography of Dante, giving the main outlines of that story which the high romantics were to find so congenial: the early devotion to an ideal woman; the career of service to his country; the unmerited exile; the unhappy wanderings; and the transfiguration of his woes in noble poetry.

A similar life of Dante was prefixed to Boyd's *Translation of the Inferno* (1785), and the contemporary allusions were illustrated with historical notes. Rogers' version (1782) was, on the other hand, entirely innocent of biography, notes, or even introduction. Rogers' *Inferno* was done in blank verse; Boyd's in a six-line stanza, riming a, a, b, c, c, b. Neither is of much intrinsic interest. Rogers, who was a well-known art collector, was as cramped and arid in his rendering as Boyd was florid and fruity. Neither cared much about accuracy of rendering. As samples of their work, we may give part of the Francesca da Rimini episode, here translated for the first time. In Rogers the beautiful adulteress answers Dante's pressing curiosity about her love for her brother-in-law as follows:

"No greater grief assails us," she replied,  
 "Than in unhappy hours to recollect  
 A better time; and this your Teacher knows.  
 But if you still to learn the tender root  
 Request, from which our am'rous dalliance sprung,  
 However irksome, I will it relate.

Together we, for pleasure, one day read  
 How strictly Lancelot was bound by love;  
 We then alone, without suspicion, were:  
 T' admire each other, often from the book  
 Our eyes were ta'en, and oft our colour chang'd;  
 That was the point of time which conquer'd us,  
 When, reading that her captivating smile  
 Was by the lover she adored kiss'd,  
 This my Companion, always with me seen,  
 Fearful and trembling, also kiss'd my mouth.  
 The Writer *Galeotto* nam'd the Book.  
 But from that day we never read in 't more."

In Boyd the same passage goes, in part:

## XXIV

"One day (a day I ever must deplore!)  
 The gentle youth, to spend a vacant hour,  
 To me the soft seducing story read  
 Of LANCELOT and fair GENEURA's love,  
 While, fascinating all the quiet grove,  
 Fallacious Peace her snares around us spread.

## XXV

"Too much I found th' insidious volume charm,  
 And PAULO's mantling blushes, rising warm,  
 Still as he read, the guilty secret told:  
 Soon from the line his eyes began to stray;  
 Soon did my yielding looks my heart betray,  
 Nor needed words our wishes to unfold.

## XXVI

"Eager to realize the story'd bliss,  
 Trembling he snatched the half-resented kiss,  
 To ill soon lesson'd by the pandar-page!  
 Vile pandar-page! it smooth'd the paths of shame."  
 While thus she spoke, the partner of her flame  
 Tun'd his deep sorrows to the whirlwind's rage.

Boyd's translation, printed in Dublin, was well enough received in England, the reviewer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for May, 1785, observing that though the original is "often amplified and

sometimes retrenched," "This version is in general correct and spirited, and frequently poetical. . ." Boyd took the hint. Though he had lost his chance with Ariosto, there were still wide fields in which a translator from the Italian could make a name for himself. Almost immediately he seems to have set about a complete translation of Dante. This austere poet was, after all, more in keeping than Ariosto with the Irishman's clerical calling, and perhaps a surer road to preferment from Killeigh, near Tullamore.

As for the other Italian epic poets, Tasso could afford to rest on his laurels. It is worth noting that Baretto planned, but never published, a London edition of the *Gerusalemme* in 1780, while two French versions of this epic—by Sablon and Lebrun—were brought out with London imprints in this year. "Londra" editions of the *Gerusalemme* (1778) and of Tasso's *Sette giornate del mondo creato* (1780) were issued in Leghorn. Hayley did not, of course, fail to celebrate him in the *Essay on Epic Poetry*:

The Muse of Sion, not implor'd in vain,  
Guides to th' impassion'd soul his heavenly strain.  
Blush, Boileau, blush, and for that pride atone  
Which slander'd Genius far above thy own;  
And thou, great injur'd Bard, thy station claim  
Amid the Demi-gods of Epic name. . .

It is interesting to note that the *Morgante Maggiore* of Pulci was now published in Leghorn with a London imprint (1778); also, the *Italia liberata dai goti* of the "regular" Trissino (1779). Still more interesting was the appearance of a similar "Londra" edition of Berni's *rifacimento* of Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* (1781), followed by a "Dublino" edition of Domenichi's reworking of the same (1784). In the preface to his *Orlando* Hoole gave a short résumé of the poem which Ariosto had used as a springboard from which to leap into his enchanted world. Of the purely mock heroic epics, commended as a class by Baretto and Joseph Warton, Tassoni's *Secchia rapita* (1779), Forteguerri's *Ricciardetto* (1780), and Duperrier-Dumouriez's French translation of the latter (1781) were brought out with London imprints.

By 1785, then, Italian literature, character, history, arts, and

scenery may be said to have won for themselves a respected place in English thought. And every day that place was growing higher. There were still, to be sure, old-fashioned travellers like George Edward Ayscough, Mary Berry, or Martin Sherlock who could find the Italians dirty, lazy, murderous, ceremonious, and adulterous—but their number was steadily decreasing. There were still critics like Thomas Warton, James Beattie, and John Pinkerton who could find the Italian poets extravagant, absurd, or even disgusting—but they had to admit that they had solid and undeniable beauties. The worst they could say, usually, was that the Italians are too fond of voluptuous friendships between the sexes, support too many "charitable establishments," and do rather too little to shake off their politically "ignoble slumber;"<sup>28</sup> or that "The real

<sup>28</sup> From William Beckford's *Dreams, Waking Thoughts, and Incidents; in a Series of Letters from Various Parts of Europe* (1783). I am sorry that my objectives in this study make it impossible to dwell at length on a book bursting with gorgeous descriptions of Italian cities, temples, pictures, gardens, and sunsets. Since the origins of the romantic feeling for the exotic and sometimes painfully lovely beauty of Italian surfaces would not have repaid detailed study in the present volume, I have not undertaken it. I cannot, however, dismiss a book like Beckford's, which foreshadowed and probably affected this feeling, without a word. Let that word, since the originality, fascination, and influence of this work have never been sufficiently acknowledged, be one of reparation.

Venice, as everyone knows, was to poets like Byron and Shelley, long before they had ever actually seen it, "a fairy city of the heart." In no small measure their delight was admittedly due to the Venetian scenes in Mrs. Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), the first imaginative English work of the eighteenth century to exploit on a large scale what is still called the romantic charm of Venice. Now, since Mrs. Radcliffe herself never visited Venice, the question of who first discovered this peculiar charm—nature blending with art, love with folly, splendor with decay—has often been raised. Though students have usually pointed to Mrs. Piozzi, I think the honor should go, if to any one person, to Beckford, and not merely because he travelled earlier. If Mrs. Radcliffe drew heavily on Mrs. Piozzi's *Observations* (1789) in her *Mysteries*, she drew still more heavily on Beckford's *Dreams* (1783). Let anyone who doubts compare the impressions of Emily, the Radcliffe heroine, on approaching Venice with actual impressions described by Beckford and Piozzi. What most forcibly struck the latter was the fact that the emerging buildings "revived all the ideas inspired by Canaletti, whose views of this town are

beauties of Dante . . . fall into very small compass, consisting chiefly of the celebrated tale of Ugolino, and of that in the close of

most scrupulously exact, those especially which one sees at the Queen of England's house in St. James's Park. . . " On a certain memorable occasion the author of *Vathek*, by contrast,

looked up . . . and beheld a troubled sky, shot with vivid red, the Lagunes tinted like opal, and the islands of a glowing flame-colour. The lofty mountains of the distant continent appeared of a deep, melancholy grey, and innumerable gondolas were passing to and fro in all their blackness. The sun, after a long struggle, was swallowed up in the tempestuous clouds. In an hour we drew near to Venice, and saw its world of domes rising out of the waters. A fresh breeze bore the toll of innumerable bells to my ear. Sadness came over me as I entered the great canal. . .

This, it seems to me, is not merely prelude to the romantic sense of the Venetian picturesque—it is the thing itself, which Mrs. Radcliffe was wise enough to make use of. Beckford was also happy and beforehand in rendering what we may call the surface souls of little-appreciated places like Lucca, Arqua, and Terracina.

In the realm of the fine arts we find him equally sensitive and clairvoyant. In the Uffizi at Florence the picture which moved him to his highest flight of prose was precisely the one which later stirred Shelley to poetry.

But nothing struck me more than a Medusa's head by that surprising genius, Leonardo da Vinci. It appears just severed from the body, and cast on the damp pavement of a cavern: a deadly paleness covers the countenance, and the mouth exhales a pestilential vapour; the snakes, which fill almost the whole picture, [are] beginning to untwist their folds; one or two seem already crept away and crawling up the rock in company with toads and other venomous reptiles. The colouring of these disgusting objects is faithful to a great degree; the effect of light, prodigious; the whole, so masterly that I could not help entering into this description. . .

In his affection for the Pisan Campo Santo Beckford not only anticipated but outdid most of the high romantics. It is usually with the name of Leigh Hunt that we associate the first keen appreciation of Pisa's "crowning glory," its walls "like a dream of humanity during the twilight of creation." But what could be keener, though lightly keyed, than the following?

Ranges of slender pillars, formed of the whitest marble and glistening in the sun, support the arcades, which are carved with innumerable stars and roses, partly gothic, and partly saracenic. Strange paintings of hell and the devil, mostly taken from Dante's rhapsodies, cover the walls of these fantastic galleries. . . I was quite seized by the strangeness of the place, and paced fifty times round and round the cloisters. . . [T]here is so much caprice, such an exotic look in the whole scene, that, without any violent effort of imagination, one might imagine one's self in fairy land. Every object is new; every ornament original: the mixture of antique sarcophagi with gothic sepulchres compleats the vagaries of the prospect,

the Vth Canto of the *Inferno*. . ."<sup>24</sup> The conservative school of critics of both Italian manners and literature had held out, I think, just about as long as it could. By 1785 its objections were decidedly tinged with coyness. It could be expected, any time now, to fall prey to its quarry.

As for the lovers of things Italian, they were a growing band, centering in England but largely recruited, as we have seen, from Scotland and Ireland. Simultaneously with their increasing admiration for Italian life, history, and literature, there was growing up an idea which was to give point to their affection and have a vivifying effect on English imaginative literature. This was the idea that English writers should, if they wished to make the great days of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, and Milton come again, return for inspiration to that life and literature which had nourished their forefathers. Especially instrumental in building up a sense of the early literary relations between Italy and England were John Upton's edition of *The Faerie Queene* (1758), Tyrwhitt's *Canterbury Tales of Chaucer* (1775-78), and Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry* (1774-81). But before there could be any real renaissance of English poetry through a return to Italian models and subjects, there would, of course, have to be diffused through the country a great deal more knowledge of Italian things than yet existed.

About this time, however, some young poets decided to see what they could do, working with no more than those ideas, feelings, and facts whose growth we have been tracing in the last two chapters. Something had been gained, and something might, undoubtedly, be done. Just what could be done we shall examine at the beginning of the next chapter.

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to which, one day or other, I think of returning, to act a visionary part, hear visionary music, and commune with sprites; for I shall never find in the whole universe besides so whimsical a theatre.

As we may readily imagine, Beckford's appreciation of Michelangelo, though never metaphysical, was tinged with appropriately romantic hyperbole.

Had the growth of English feeling, enthusiastic or melancholy, for Italian superficialities been more closely related to my theme, Beckford would obviously have ranked high among the heroes of this study.

<sup>24</sup> From John Pinkerton's *Letters of Literature* (1785).





#### IV

THE FIRST BOATLOAD OF POETRY IS LAUNCHED  
ON A TIDE THAT CONTINUES TO RISE  
1785-1795



#### PART IV

### THE FIRST BOATLOAD OF POETRY IS LAUNCHED ON A TIDE THAT CONTINUES TO RISE

1785-1795

Chief among the English writers who began to turn to poetic purposes such feelings and information about Italian character, freedom, history, poetry, pictures, and scenery as existed in 1785 were the authors of *The Florence Miscellany*, published in Italy toward the end of that year. These were three young English travellers, Bertie Greatheed, Robert Merry, and William Parsons, whom the famous Mrs. Thrale, now Signora Piozzi, gathered under her wing in Florence in 1784 and 1785. Signora or, as she is usually called, Mrs. Piozzi herself contributed a few verses to the *Miscellany*, but these, not touching on Italy, are impertinent to our subject. In addition to their poems in the *Miscellany*, both Parsons and Merry expressed their thoughts on Italy elsewhere: the former in *A Poetical Tour* (1787), the latter in *The Laurel of Liberty* (1790). Other young poets—some of them later known to fame—who came forward in the decade under consideration with verses on Italian things included Samuel Rogers, William Preston, John Courtenay, Thomas Warwick, and William Wordsworth. To my discussion of *The Florence Miscellany*, probably the most important book of poetry on Italian themes to appear in the eighteenth century, I beg leave to tag odds and ends from these latter poets, their references to Italy being usually either short or fragmentary. If neither the volume nor the quality of the verse we are about to consider achieves much importance, we must not censure our poets too severely. On one hand, they lacked the divine fire; on the other, information. Of such talents and information as they possessed they made, I think, all they could. How that information continued steadily to grow we shall consider in the latter sections of the present chapter.

ROBERT MERRY, WILLIAM PARSONS, BERTIE GREATHEED,  
 SAMUEL ROGERS, WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, AND  
 OTHERS: ITALIAN GAINS TURNED TO POETIC  
 PURPOSES: 1785-1794

Merry, Parsons, and Greatheed, taken together with Mrs. Piozzi, are often called Della Cruscans. This name seems to have been widely applied to them, however, only after they had carried their verse-writing methods and mania back to England. Merry is said to have first used his pseudonym, "Della Crusca," when he published in the *World* of 29 June, 1787, his "Adieu and Recall to Love." This poem, replied to by Hannah Cowley under the pen name of "Anna Matilda," precipitated in certain London papers an orgy of poetical correspondence, the authors of which, generally anonymous but including our Florentine poets, were called, from their ring-master, Della Cruscans. Strictly, these fluttering Della Cruscans of London have nothing to do with our theme, since they wrote little or nothing about Italy. The adjective "Della Cruscan" is often used retroactively, however, to signify the Florence group, as in *Webster's New International Dictionary* (1928), where it is said to designate "a school of affected and sentimental English poets, most of whom lived in Florence about 1785. . ." It is even possible that Merry, Greatheed, and Parsons, when residing in Florence, called each other Della Cruscans. This possibility leads me to dwell for a minute on the origin of the pseudonym adopted by Merry. The received explanation,<sup>1</sup> I am afraid, will not hold water.

To say that Merry, on his return to England in 1787, adopted "Della Crusca" for his pseudonym because he was a member of the Accademia della Crusca is not, so far as I can make out, correct. I have come across no evidence that he was ever a member of this academy. He could hardly, indeed, have been. For when he arrived in Florence in 1784—the date generally agreed on—this academy had ceased to exist. There are at least three good reasons why this mistake about Merry's membership in the Accademia della Crusca should never have been made, or, if made, never so assiduously

<sup>1</sup> See the *Dictionary of National Biography*, *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, J. M. Longaker's *The Della Cruscans and William Gifford*, and other works which mention Merry.

repeated from book to book as it has been. In the first place, it is a matter of common knowledge that the Grand Duke Leopold of Tuscany put an end to this academy, along with two other old Tuscan societies, on 7 July, 1783. In the second place, any one who takes the trouble to read the first ten pages of *The Florence Miscellany* cannot fail to discover this fact. In the third place, Merry never suffixed the title of member of this distinguished body to his name in any of his writings that I have seen. On the contrary, he used, as any one who will take the trouble to glance at his publications will immediately perceive, the title of "Member of the Royal Academy of Florence."<sup>2</sup> On one or two of his title-pages<sup>3</sup> he notes, indeed, that this Royal Academy of Florence was a successor to the Crusca. But membership in the successor of a distinguished institution is not to be confused with membership in the original society—especially when the successor carried on as feebly as did the Accademia Fiorentina the ideals of its predecessor—not did Merry confuse them. It is probable that the true origin of his pseudonym lay in the differences, not in the similarities, between these institutions.

The Accademia della Crusca was founded, it will be remembered, for the purpose of purifying the Italian tongue by recourse to the usage of those famous fathers of Italian poetry and prose, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio; dedicated to guarding it from degeneration; and occupied with stimulating the composition of works in that pure and eminently poetic idiom. The Real Accademia Fiorentina, usually called merely the Accademia Fiorentina, was, on the other hand, an institution created by Leopold to merge together the various Tuscan societies which he had abolished.<sup>4</sup> It was entirely under his thumb. Its aim was not the promotion of the arts and sciences, but the promotion of such arts as would not criticize or endanger his sway; such sciences as appealed to him as useful and "enlightened." As for the preservation

<sup>2</sup> Membership in the "Florentine Academy" is correctly ascribed to him in *Webster's New International Dictionary* (1928).

<sup>3</sup> See *Paulina; or, The Russian Daughier* (1787).

<sup>4</sup> These included, besides the Crusca, the Accademia degli Apatisti and the Accademia Fiorentina, out of respect to which the grand duke named his innovation.

of Tuscan linguistic standards, the efficient Austrian seems to have considered it a waste of time;<sup>6</sup> nor did he encourage his academicians to write or publish poetry, especially on political themes. His subjects, needless to say, muttered at this curb on their intellectual life, and groaned at the dangers they saw in store for the beloved tongue of Dante and Boccaccio. Italians everywhere grieved or grew indignant at what they considered an Austrian insult to the Italian language and literature. One of the most angry outbursts against the grand duke's action came in the form of a sonnet from Count Vittorio Alfieri of Piedmont, the reviver of Italian tragedy, whom we shall soon come upon in these pages. This sonnet was anonymously<sup>7</sup> translated into English for inclusion in *The Amusing Instructor* (1792) of Antonio Montucci, a popular Italian master who, himself a native of Siena, could find no words strong enough to condemn "the harsh command of a rude German despot." In this sonnet Alfieri refers to the old Accademia della Crusca as a mother; to the Accademia Fiorentina as a step-dame. The translation runs as follows:

The Tuscan Idiom sweet, Italia's pride,  
 At which old Arno prouder roll'd his flood,  
 Sad and neglected droops, all aid denied  
 Of those that once her faithful champions stood.  
 Meanwhile beneath an iron sceptre's stroke  
 The mother dies; and in her stead appears  
 A step-dame form, whose soul-degrading yoke  
 To shame and sadness dooms her future years.  
 A prey to want and indolence, 'tis true,  
 For many a lustre past, the mother pin'd,  
 Yet still some shadow of her fame remain'd.  
 What ills, Italia! crowd upon thy view!  
 Whilst round thy limbs the Goth his chains has twin'd,  
 And by his harsh command thy very voice restrained!

When Robert Merry, well known for his liberty-loving spirit, accepted membership in the grand duke's academy, it was not,

<sup>6</sup> A projected fifth and revised edition of the famous *Vocabolario della Crusca*, supposed to have been under Leopold's patronage, fell through.

<sup>7</sup> It is probable that it was Englished by Montucci's friend and patron, William Roscoe.

then, I think, because it brought him closer to the man—incidentally his rival in love—who had abolished the Accademia della Crusca. It seems rather to have been because it threw him into the arms of former Della Cruscans, literary and political malcontents who secretly hated Leopold and longed to restore that venerable institution. Sympathy with these actually led Merry to head in Florence a small coterie of Italian and English poets who felt that the grand duke's decree against the Crusca had dealt a staggering blow at Italian poetry. Just now, as we know, certain Englishmen were beginning to think that Italian poetry was the true poetry; that English poetry had been great only in so far as it had followed Italian precedent. To them the old Accademia della Crusca, the champion of Dante and Petrarch, appeared as the guardian of priceless poetic treasures and prescriptions. Its traditions and standards had, at all costs, to be preserved. Spurred on by these ideas, Merry, who quickly made a poetical reputation for himself after his arrival in Florence in 1784, appears to have conceived the project of writing, with the help of Greatheed, Parsons, Mrs. Piozzi, and some Italian friends, a quantity of verse which, often imitating Italian rimes and meters and usually dealing with Italian themes, would carry on, so to speak, the torch lit by Dante. This verse, when collected, was published as *The Florence Miscellany*. Merry's Italian friends, including Lorenzo Pignotti, Ippolito Pindemonte (by courtesy, Marquis), the Count of Elci, and a certain D. M. L., enthusiastically contributed original verses such as would lend a distinctly Italian tone to a volume intended to resemble those so often published by members of the various Italian literary academies. Thus was Leopold circumvented, and three Englishmen carried on the precious traditions of Tuscan poetry! Were they not, in a sense, successors of the venerable Della Cruscans? English Della Cruscans. And what fitter than that they should call each other by that name? What fitter, at least, than that Merry should think himself entitled to it? This, from all I can make out, was the true origin of his famous pseudonym.

Mrs. Piozzi's preface to the *Miscellany*, in which she says of the poems that "we wrote them to divert ourselves, and to say kind things of each other," has given the unreading world a rather false



idea of the book. Mrs. Piozzi was not really a competent judge of the aims of the *Miscellany*. She contributed very little to it and confesses to having been continually out of touch with her collaborators. She seems, indeed—if we are to believe her so-called *Autobiography*<sup>1</sup>—to have been so deeply taken up with her charming Italian husband that she did not even recognize the difference between the Accademia della Crusca and its hateful successor! Though many of the poems in *The Florence Miscellany* may seem to the modern reader mere trifling *jeux d'esprit*, they were undoubtedly taken very seriously by their authors. All these young men, Merry, Parsons, and Greatheed, were really in quest of poetical fame. They said so again and again in their poems, and they were not joking. Gathered together in Italy, they hoped to draw inspiration from the very air and soil which had nourished Chaucer and Milton. When Merry summoned Parsons and Greatheed to grow famous by applying the secret of Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, and Ariosto, those now admitted masters of great poetry, to Italian themes, they set to work with a will. If strong or pathetic feelings, clothed in rather exotic images, tropes, and stanza forms, were really the secret of great poetry, they were ready to accomplish a revolution against the still popular school of Pope. Nor did they countenance the possibility of failure. In their own eyes, at least, *The Florence Miscellany* was a great book.

In "A Dream," the first poem in the collection, Bertie Greatheed gave an imaginative account of how the book came to be written, much truer to the ambitious notions of its chief writers, I think, than Mrs. Piozzi's introduction. In this poem the Tuscan Muse goes looking, mostly in vain, for worshippers among the modern Italians. Lorenzo Pignotti is the only son to be found. Cries she:

Of Vo'ries once a num'rous band,  
In Cosmo's time, adorn'd the land;  
And is that band so num'rous gone?  
And does Lorenzo reign alone?

Alarmed at the dearth of followers, the Muse "upsprang"—  
With awful voice call'd Dante's<sup>s</sup> shade,  
And summon'd Petrarch to her aid. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Ed. by Abraham Hayward (1861).

<sup>\*</sup> Not in Toynbee.

Then skimming o'er Certaldo's spires,  
Where gay Boccaccio felt her fires,  
With chrystal woe bedew'd his grave. . .

In Florence, saddest sight of all,

She found her Crusca's triumphs o'er;  
And e'en its name was now no more.  
But ign'rance rear'd her heavy head,  
While ev'ry art and science fled.

In despair the Muse at this point determined to seek out the shade of Milton in the Val d'Arno,

For, mindful of the flame he caught  
When there he nurs'd his growing thought,  
His grateful spirit loves to rove,  
And haunt again th' inspiring grove.

To her supplication to find followers for her, Milton gallantly replied:

"I'll seek proud Albion's chalky shore,  
Where foamy waves tumultuous roar,  
And there a genuine Band I'll raise  
To hither come and sing thy praise;  
For Thames shall sooner cease to glide  
Than I forget fair Arno's side."

I need not add that the "Band" which came at Milton's bidding to serve the Tuscan Muse, stricken almost dumb by the abolition of her favored academy, consisted of Merry, Greatheed, Parsons, and Mrs. Piozzi. To these we may refer, if we wish, as Della Cruscan on the well-founded supposition that they sometimes referred to themselves as such. Perhaps it would be well to call them the Della Cruscan of Florence in order to distinguish them from the later Della Cruscan of London, satirized by Gifford in *The Baviad* and *Mæviad*. It is significant, I think, that Gifford did not attack *The Florence Miscellany*, of which he says that though he once looked into it, "the only use I then made of it was to extract a sounding passage from the odes of that deep-mouthed Theban, Bertie Greatheed, Esqr." The *Miscellany*, as a matter of fact, had a great deal more to it than the silly verses printed in the *World*.

It was based on things solidier than imaginary love affairs whipped up by exhibitionist correspondence in the papers. It was based on affection for Italian poetry, liberty, history, and scenery. It has been hailed by the few persons who have read it as a definite prelude to many of the poetic forms, themes, and emotions which reached their height in Byron, Keats, and Shelley. In no way was it more romantic or more prelusive than in its turning to Italy for inspiration.

With my brief discussion of *The Florence Miscellany* I shall take the liberty, as I said before, of interweaving other references of Merry and Parsons, and even of certain other poets of the time, to Italy. All the poems I am about to discuss, taken together, may be thought of as the first boatload of verse launched on the rising Italian tide—as a modest overture to the impassioned opera staged by the romanticists to come. Passing over *The Arno Miscellany* (1784), a slight work by the Della Cruscans of Florence which contains no significant references to Italy, we may begin by considering the interest of our poets in Italian politics and independence. These political poems I put first, not because they bulk very large, but merely because we have not heard any verse on this subject since the days of the friends of Corsica. With these poets interest in Italian politics took, usually, the form of attacks on Leopold, the abolisher of the Italian Della Cruscans. The English successors of those sorely tried academicians cared not that the grand duke should have succeeded in organizing Tuscany into one of the model states of Europe by reducing religious bodies, removing internal customs' barriers, encouraging commerce, and revising the criminal code according to the most advanced suggestions of Beccaria. They insisted on seeing him as an absolute despot, capable of using his arbitrary power to oppress his subjects in their tenderest feelings. The very elegant tone often adopted by the English Della Cruscans sometimes obscures the essentially martial spirit which, I believe, animated their attacks on Leopold.

There was real regret, for instance, at the bottom of Mr. Parsons' sugary lament, in his "Epistle to the Marquis Pindemonte at Verona," that

now no more the blue-eyed Pleasures rove  
 Arno's green banks, or Boboli thy grove! . . .  
 While the fierce Austrian eagle rears the head,  
 Like tim'rous doves his ravening beak they fly  
 To sport and flutter in a kinder sky!

In an *Elegy Written at Florence* (1785)—and probably published there, though bearing the imprint of Geneva—Parsons, about whose character one can learn nothing except from his poems, gives us a sharper taste of his temper. This poem was written on the occasion of the grand duke's decreeing that all his subjects, high and low, should, for the sake of hygiene, be buried together, nameless, two or more in a grave, without monument or consecration. It begins with a night picture of the unhonored dead being conveyed by ruffians on mules to a form of burial unworthy of South Sea islanders. It is a damnable tyranny, says the poet, which takes away from the Italians the comforts and sentimental, not to say religious, satisfactions of their time-honored funeral rites:

Beneath the yoke how sad FLORENTIA bends!  
*Her* sons escape not with the loss of breath.  
 E'en then fell tyranny his rod extends,  
 That waves new horrors o'er the realms of Death. . . .

Shall then th' unfeeling Austrian's stern commands  
 To quell these sacred sentiments presume,  
 While with the name of *Prejudice* he brands  
 The *Charities* that glow beyond the Tomb?

This "slavish awe/The humbled Vassal to his Tyrant pays" must cease! Then, Leopold,

Then tremble, Thou, lest soon th' impatient throng  
 Tear the vain crown from thy too impious head;  
 Ne'er can the LIVING be respected long,  
 Who teach their subjects to despise the DEAD!

Even John Courtenay, a political writer usually unfavorable to the Italians in his *Present State of the Manners, Arts, and Politics of France and Italy* (1794), could not stifle his indignation at this high-handed procedure of the grand duke:

His Highness commands—no distinctions are made  
 Between the sweet Virgin and frousy old Jade.  
 In vain their hard fate foolish mothers deplore,  
 And with horror behold the cramm'd hearse at the door.

For weeping they long to strew flow'rs o'er the bier,  
 As if even in Death we felt sympathy's tear:  
 But Le'pold most wisely with Machi'vel art  
 This innate delusion has plucked from the heart;  
 How godlike<sup>a</sup> his aim, thus to equalise Slaves,  
 And their Freedom restore in Republican graves!

How happy the realms where such potentates reign,  
 Like Tuscany's Duke—or the Sovereign of Spain. . .

Bertie Greathed went a step beyond Parsons. Rise! he shouted to the Italians, rise, oust your foreign tyrants, reëstablish your old academies, and you will again excel the world, as once, in virtue, poetry, and art. This is the theme of his "Ode on Apathy" in the *Miscellany*.

O would the sons of Italy arise,  
 And shake the leaden slumbers from their eyes,  
 Gaze on their fertile plains by nature blest,  
 And rouse the latent fire that warm'd their breast,  
 That dauntless energy of soul  
 That sav'd the tott'ring Capitol—

then should the world again see great deeds of manly patriotism, science, industry, and commerce. Let them rise and prove to all mankind

That virtue still can charm the present hour,  
 Not less admir'd, nor dear,  
 Than when pale Cataline felt Tully's pow'r,  
 And violating Appius learn'd to fear;  
 So radiant Glory's beams divine  
 Shall once again transcendent shine  
 On this proud land, of old renown'd,  
 Which Apennines divide, and Alps and seas surround.

<sup>a</sup> For "goldlike."

The reader must agree, I think, that Greatheed's allusion in the last two lines to Petrarch's description, so dear to the hearts of all Italians, of his native land is apt and graceful, and shows a strong identification of the author's sympathies with the cause he is advocating.

Merry, though the leader of the group and well known for a never-failing love of liberty—amply demonstrated at the University; in the Horse Guards; in his liaison with the Countess Cowper, mistress to the grand duke; in his marriage, despite family objections, with an actress; in his enthusiasm for the French Revolution; and, perhaps, in his final removal to the United States—failed to contribute any anti-Leopoldan poems to the *Miscellany*. To have done so would have been bad taste in a man who had accepted membership in the grand duke's academy. He later made up for his good manners, however, in his poem on the French Revolution, *The Laurel of Liberty* (1790). Here he described at some length the unhappiness he had personally witnessed among the Florentines in the days of his vindictive rival in love—Florence's "iron age." He accused Leopold of "false humility," "abject passion," and even "base treachery"—probably in allusion to the slander he had excited against Merry in 1787, forcing the poet to flee to England. Leopold could not abide to see his subjects smile, he said, and delighted to sow dissension among friends.

O SWEET FIRENZE! what are all thy stores,  
Thy PARIAN VENUS which the world adores . . . ?  
These but a transient comfort give  
To men, without volition doom'd to live.  
Oft when the Star of Evening in the West  
Sate like a Phoenix on her burning nest,  
I've mark'd thy sighing youths, and damsels fair,  
Tread the near meads, and whisper their despair;  
Seek myrtled FIESOLE's cool bowers, to weep,  
And pour the bitter curse "not loud but deep."  
For hard was HE that govern'd; —tho' his name,  
By Flatt'ry written on the rolls of fame,  
Has sometimes lur'd an undiscerning praise  
To swell the trav'ler's page, the poet's lays. . .

In this last line Merry was probably referring to the travels of Mercier-Dupaty or the lip service of Pignotti. I have come across no English lays in praise of Leopold.

The chief Italian interest of our poets was, perhaps, that literature which was supposed to contain the secret that, when mastered by Chaucer and Milton, had made them great. They liked, accordingly, to praise the Italian poets, translate them, imitate their meters and subjects, and find in their often pathetic fates lessons and personal warnings. The epic bards of Italy, now so well thought of in England, our Della Crusicans admired tremendously, but did not feel it possible to soar to their dizzy heights. Parsons was especially given to reading them and lamenting his own feeble strain. Always in Florence, he assures Pindemonte, he beguiled "the fleeting night" with the Italian classics—

Whether his page I turn whose song hath told  
Of pious arms led on by Godfrey bold;  
Or his of beauteous Dames, and burnish'd Knights,  
Fierce wars, and courteous deeds, and love's delights. . .

In "On Descending the River Po" he thought of the great poets who had dwelt on its banks, Virgil and that other "mighty Master in the art of song"—him

whose various page  
Blends num'rous subjects with ORLANDO's rage—

and immediately felt "Eager to imitate each Bard sublime." But the ghost of Phaëton arose from the river to teach him a lesson in the dangers of presumption, and warn him away from "works of length." In the "Epistle from Naples" in his *Poetical Tour* (1787) he records that similar desires smote him when, near Naples, he felt himself

press ITALIAN earth,  
Which gave so many Bards and Heroes birth. . .

Chief amongst these Parsons ranked Tasso:

GODFREY's fierce flame, AMINTA's softer pain,  
Still charm alike in his immortal strain.  
What though the cold BOILEAU with envious rage  
Has dar'd to blot the honors of his page . . . ?

But again he forced his "aspiring thought" to content itself with modest flights. There could be no presumption, however, in paraphrasing bits from the poets he admired so much. Accordingly he included in the *Miscellany* what he called "imitations" of "Sacripant's Soliloquy" ("La verginella è simile alla rosa") and "Medoro's Inscription" ("Liete piante, verdi erbe, limpide acque") from Ariosto; a "Translation of the First Chorus<sup>10</sup> in Tasso's *Aminta*" ("O bella età dell'oro"); and "The Story of Francesca from the Fifth Canto of Dante's *Inferno*." These imitations or translations are usually rimed to approximate the scheme of their originals, only the episode from Dante being given in heroic couplets. Taken together, they form a group of mildly interesting experiments in translation. Though the least interesting metrically, we may give here some lines of Parsons' Dante because it constitutes, so far as I know, the first detached translation of the Francesca episode, versions of which later became so popular. This "free" but vigorous translation, accompanied by a long historical note, concludes with the speech of Francesca:

"No greater grief I know  
Than to recall past joys in time of woe. . .  
One day we read how Lancelot's throbbing heart  
Felt the soft torments of love's piercing dart, . . .  
Until at length the fatal crisis came.  
When as we read how first the kiss of flame,  
On fair Ginevra's smiling mouth impress'd,  
Rais'd love's wild tumults in her yielding breast,  
The youth beside me sought an equal bliss;  
With trembling lips I met his burning kiss:  
Thus did that cursed book, with pois'nous art,  
To us perform its Galeotto's part;  
That day no more the luscious page we priz'd,  
For all it feign'd in us was realiz'd."<sup>11</sup>

Merry's use of the epic poets seems to have been confined to paraphrasing Ariosto's description of Fraud<sup>12</sup> in the poem called

<sup>10</sup> In the *Poetical Tour* (1787) he included two more choruses from the famous pastoral.

<sup>11</sup> Not in Toynbee's *Dante in English Literature* (1909), though mentioned in *Britain's Tribute to Dante in Literature and Art* (1921).

<sup>12</sup> XIV, 87.



"Il viaggio," and to a chivalric fantasy, perhaps based on Boiardo,<sup>13</sup> called "Sir Roland, a Fragment," in which a specter tries to frighten the hero with tales of a haunted castle:

"Approach yon antiquated tow'r," he cried,  
 "There bold Rinaldo, fierce Mambrino, died. . ."

Greathed showed no particular fondness for the epic poets, his bent lying entirely in another direction.

The most interesting thing I have to offer on the subject of the epic poets at this time was not done by a Della Cruscan at all. I refer to Thomas Warwick's imaginary epistle, "Leonora to Tasso," published about 1787<sup>14</sup> in the fourth edition of his *Abelard to Eloisa*. Henry Layng's old "Life of Tasso," prefixed to Doyne's translation, had suggested that Tasso's hopeless love affair could be turned to just such a poetic use. How, indeed, must the Este princess have felt when her idealistic poet was hounded for loving her, and thrown into prison by her worldly brother? In Warwick's poem she, all goodness and baffled love, compares "Her lord, her tutor," for the mutability of his fortunes or the ungratefulness of his prince, to Ulysses, Darius, and Columbus!

Now Tasso, than whose own no worthier name  
 E'er wak'd attention from the trump of fame;  
 Who won for Italy more praise than Greece,  
 Acquir'd by Jason and his golden fleece; . . .  
 Now Tasso, by his friend, imprison'd lies,  
 And Leonora aids with empty sighs.

Were mine Armida's strong enchanting pow'r,  
 I would dissolve your bands and frame a bow'r. . .

But she cannot plead with a brother who feels her love for the poet has brought disgrace on the house of Este. All she can do is wander at twilight over the scenes they have loved, wish she had been "by grandeur unbetray'd," and faint with pain at the memory of his unearthly eyes, praised by all the biographers:

<sup>13</sup> See the adventure of the Castle of Altaripa in the *Orlando innamorato*.

<sup>14</sup> This edition, undated, is assigned by the British Museum *Catalogue* to 1784, and by Halkett and Laing to 1800.

Eyes which a vestal might allure to gaze,  
 And think that angels shed not holier rays. . .  
 O Tasso! nature shrinks at thought of thee,  
 The brave man fetter'd, the black ruffians free.

The only reunion and happiness she can see for them lies in death, already fast overtaking her lover. Imagining him already a "saint serene!" she begs him to take her along to heaven:

Oh, leave me not to days of tears and sighs,  
 But snatch thy Leonora to the skies!  
 Then awful Justice shall on earth descend,  
 Whom falt'ring villains dare not call their friend. . .

In this poem Warwick pondered a problem—the plight of the unwordly poet in a conventional, hard, self-seeking, and deceitful world—of which the romantic poets were never to tire. It often seems, indeed, as if they loved the Italian epic poets more for their frustrated lives than for their successful poetry. All of them, Dante, Tasso, and, at a stretch, Ariosto, could be made into illustrations of the high-minded poet fallen among worldlings and sneered at by Pharisaical hypocrites.

Of the Italian lyric poets, both old and modern, Petrarch was, of course, the favorite with the Della Cruscans of Florence and others. Both Parsons and Greathed were devotees. The latter wrote two Italian sonnets for the *Miscellany*, both full of anguish for an absent mistress. In what was supposed to be true Petrarchan style these call on the "tremulante, ameno zeffiretto" to go die on the beloved's breast; on the "vago augel" and the "errante luna" to take their ironical suggestions away from the lover's senses; and on the "Fonte fallace" to give back the image it once so beautifully reflected. In a poem on the naming of Florence Mrs. Piozzi said of Pallas Athena (!):

She talk'd of Petrarca, her favourite son,  
 Said GREATHED should finish what he had begun. . .

Parsons, for his part, translated a sonnet and a *canzone*, one printed in the *Miscellany*; both, in his *Poetical Tour*. With Petrarch he liked to "drop the sadly-pleasing tear," and once composed a long poem called "Stanzas on Reading Petrarch's Sonnets on the

Death of Laura." In this he proposed Petrarch as the model of a true poet, in contrast to those French and English couplet-polishers against whom the Della Cruscans of Florence were in conscious revolt. The song of the nightingale is, he said, far more arresting than that of all the merry songsters put together:

So PETRARCH, when o'er Laura's bier,  
Too early doom'd to die,  
He drops the never-ceasing tear,  
And heaves the constant sigh,  
Does far, far more our thoughts engage,  
While sad we turn th' infectious page,  
Than Bards in whose more labor'd lines  
The glaze of wit forever shines;  
Who only boast, great summit of their art,  
To raise the transient smile, not fire the throbbing heart.

In *Sonnets and Miscellaneous Poems* (1789) Thomas Russell paraphrased three or four of Petrarch's sonnets to Laura *in morte*, and eulogized, in "To Valclusa," the scene of his immortal woes. 1789 also saw the publication of Bowles' *Fourteen Sonnets*, already noticed. The most extensive contemporary tribute to Petrarch occurred, however, in William Preston's *Poetical Works* (1793). Besides mimicking the Italian in a whole series of sonnets, this Irishman wrote a long poem inspired by his life and works—"Petrarch, a Vision." In Preston's "Vision" Petrarch appears to the sleeping rimer and, by describing the awful price he has had to pay for glory, encourages him to resist his hopeless love for a certain Clara. This scheme gives the poet a good chance to turn the chief outlines of Sade's biography into verse. A dozen of the ninety-eight middling verses which make up the poem will suffice us here. Petrarch speaks, describing his early endowments:

"Mine the clear spirit, mine the matchless lyre,  
The thought of angels, and the words of fire; . . .  
Contending monarchs woo'd me for their own,  
Contending cities wreath'd the laureat crown;  
Yet then, the vilest outcast of the train  
That toil thro' life in famine, scorn, and pain,  
Compar'd with me, an envied doom possess. . ."

In Preston's conception Laura was something of a man-eater, not the bread-and-butter heroine that Tytler had argued for. After seizing the poet's heart from his bosom, preying on it, and filling it with "pangs, despair, and frenzy," she hands it back to him with a peremptory gesture:

" '[Go] rove,' she said, 'for years of anguish rove,  
The pride, the martyr of imperious love.  
Go, bright in sufferings, agonize to fame;  
Go, like the phenix, feed a matchless flame. . . ' "

The game, concludes Petrarch, was hardly worth the candle:

"O wretched man! whom stormy passion bears,  
To sail to glory thro' a flood of tears."

Many other lyric or minor Italian poets, both past and present, were admired, translated, or imitated by the Della Cruscans of Florence. From Metastasio, Poliziano, and Marino, Parsons made a few versions; Mrs. Piozzi, from Parini and Pindemonte. Merry translated a long poem from Pignotti, *Roberto Manners, poemetto in versi sciolti*,<sup>15</sup> and wrote verses in praise of Alfieri. All our poets showed a marked fondness for Italian meters and stanza forms, which they either imitated outright or slightly varied. Both Merry and Parsons wrote songs which may possibly have been suggested by similar productions of Metastasio and Frugoni. Without actually duplicating *ottava rima*, Parsons flirted with this stanza. The favorite poetic form of Merry, Parsons, and Greatheed seems, however, to have been the ode, admitting, as it does, of invention, divagation, and variety. In Italian poetry they found a storehouse of models, from which they chose for imitation the less complicated forms of the *canzone petrarchesca* or *canzone pindaresca*, and the more complicated forms of the *canzonetta anacreontica*. These they followed in such a way as to remind us from time to time, though only vaguely, of Petrarch, Chiabrera, Menzini, or Testi. Their experiments range from the simple stanza form of Parson's "Ode on the Siroc"—

<sup>15</sup> *Robert Manners* was printed separately from *The Florence Miscellany*, though in the same year (1785).

What horrid force usurps the air,  
 And, leagu'd with Anguish and Despair,  
 Impels the sultry gales?  
 With nerves relax'd, and languid eye,  
 I see the shrinking pleasures fly:  
 The fierce SIROC prevails—

to the complex configuration of Merry's "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Rome, Irregular." Bertie Greatheed's unrimed "Ode to Duel" is probably modelled after the classical *odi* of Chiabrera. The following stanza from this odd address to the duel suggests nothing so much as modern free verse:

Would thou hadst perish'd then,  
 When, beckon'd by the frantic Eremite,  
 Tancred, and Raymond, and the valiant Godfrey  
 Led their accoutred Knights  
 Against the unknown Saracen,  
 Dispeopling Europe to waste Asia's plains.

Merry's dithyrambs to Venus, Diana, and Bacchus, especially that to the latter, took hints from Redi's *Bacco in Toscana*. The following lines are paraphrased from several parts of the Italian:

Welcome, welcome, rosy God!  
 Welcome, with thine ivy rod,  
 Welcome, with thy jocund train,  
 Welcome to the Tuscan plain.  
 Let us laugh,  
 And let us quaff  
 Rich ALBANO,  
 Bright VAJANO,  
 Nor thy grape,  
 MONTALCINO! shall escape;  
 Let the MEZZOMONTE flow,  
 Bid the ALIATIC glow,  
 While, Sovereign of all other wines,  
 MONTEPULCIANO proudly shines.

In concluding our picture of what the Della Crusicans of Florence and their contemporaries were able to make of Italian literature, let me notice Merry's "Verses Sent to Count Alfieri at Pisa in

Return for a Present of His Tragedies." These lines seem to be the first important English reference to this new force in Italian drama. After all, it was only according to a very special and prettified definition of the term that one could call the smooth Metastasio a tragic playwright. In Alfieri appeared at last a man determined to give Italy real tragic drama, couched in language intended to revive the cryptic pungency and asperity of Dante himself. The themes which he chose turned more often than not on some historical struggle for liberty, in depicting which he sought to rouse Italians' love of freedom by denouncing tyrants and representing conspirators as spiritually triumphant even when physically defeated. Of his plays we shall have something more to say when we come upon English editions, translations, and imitations of them. Meanwhile, we may note that in Merry's poem the Tragic Muse, after casting a look of longing on "the poison'd bowl" and grasping "her bleeding dagger fast," cries:

"O Italy, renown'd of yore  
For sons who felt thy noblest fire!  
Say, canst thou boast such sons no more,  
Say, must the heavenly flame expire?"

Whereupon the river god, Arno, raises his head to tell her that a bard has been born "Who culls for thee each mystic flower":

"No trivial Bard, his lays reveal  
A pathos deep, and warble wild,  
That bid the starting passions feel;  
Melpomene, receive thy child."

With solemn step she stalk'd along,  
And reach'd the tow'ring height of fame;  
She blew the trumpet loud and strong,  
That told around ALFIERI's name.

In a desire to rime upon the events of Italian history Mr. Parsons shone almost alone among the Della Cruscans. And his knowledge of the subject, it must be confessed, was confined to the Medici crimes and scandals detected by the Earl of Cork. Cosimo's incest with his daughter, Isabella; Garzia's murder of his elder

brother, Cardinal Giovanni, for which his father punished him so terribly; Ferdinando's poisoning of Francesco, the second grand duke, and his shamefully maligned consort, Bianca Capello—these were stories which Parsons could never get out of his head when thinking of the otherwise glorious history of the Medici. In "Vallombrosa" he briefly reviews the history of Florence, rejoicing to picture how "Cosmo's glorious race" put an end to ancient faction and revived the arts and sciences. He cannot forget, however, that these Medici stained their intellectuality with savage passions:

Yet alas! Reflection sage,  
As she turns th' historic page,  
Must sigh to think what furies dar'd  
Invade the breasts which Science shar'd,  
Fierce Revenge, and haughty Pride,  
Foul Incest, and fell Fratricide!  
While Pity's mournful tears are paid  
To the youthful Prelate's shade,  
And murder'd Bianca's fatal charms,  
Clasp'd in her dying consort's arms.

The only other versification of Italian history that I have come across in this period occurs in Samuel Rogers' *Pleasures of Memory* (1792). We love the scenes of our childhood, he says, because, according to the general law that "kindred objects kindred thoughts inspire," they bring back the joys of youth. In illustration of the strength of this principle he cites the case of Iacopo Foscari, so touchingly told by Moore:

For this young FOSCARI, whose hapless fate  
Venice should blush to hear the Muse relate,  
When exile wore his blooming years away,  
To sorrow's long soliloquies a prey,  
When reason, justice, vainly urged his cause,  
For this he roused her sanguinary laws;  
Glad to return, tho' Hope could grant no more,  
And chains and torture hail'd him to the shore.

One or two novels and plays of this time drew, albeit slightly or incorrectly, on Italian history for a background. Robert Jephson's

*Julia; or, The Italian Lover* (1787) looked back to the time when Venice was fighting the Turks for possession of Candia. Andrew McDonald's *Fair Apostate* (in *Miscellaneous Works*, 1791) was laid in Norman Sicily, while his *Princess of Tarento* (in same) turned to the good old days of Alfonso I, King of Naples. Mrs. Radcliffe's *Sicilian Romance* (1790) was timed "toward the close of the sixteenth century," in "that warlike and turbulent age" when "Italy was agitated by internal commotions, and persecuted by foreign invaders"; while *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) dated from 1584, when Italy was ravaged by bands of strange creatures called *condottieri*, a lawless race of men "not known in our age, and but faintly described [!] in the history of their own." While not important in themselves, these slight references to Italian history in poems, plays, and novels are of interest to a tracker of origins. Though these frail shoots show little promise, a sturdy tree of poetry was to spring up on their site, and that shortly. Just now it had practically nothing to feed on. In a few years, however, important English historians of Italy would soak the ground with freshening rain.

While Italian fine arts, as inspirers of poetry, were much more active than Italian history, the results hold little interest for us. In spite of the transcendental note which Sir Joshua Reynolds had tried, at least in the case of Michelangelo, to inject into it, English appreciation of painting continued primly academic. Short versified guidebooks, characterizing each painter according to his peculiar excellence, continued the vogue. Whenever Merry had a minute to spare from the carnival, he hastened away, he says, to the Tribune or the Vatican to

Learn to estimate by rules  
The excellence of diff'rent schools,  
And with judging eye compare  
Titian's touch, and Guido's air.

Parsons' "Epistle to the Marquis Pindemonte" is filled with conventional descriptions of the pictures in the Tribune at Florence, of which I dare not, in conscience, give more than a few lines:

On the soft bed see Titian's fair recline;  
Her naked charms that with full lustre shine,



Her wanton eyes that "dart contagious fire,"  
 Prompt the loose wish, and lawless loves inspire.  
 In Guido's softer style exprest,  
 With heav'n-fix'd eye, and arms that cross her breast,  
 The meek Madonna's looks, devout and pure,  
 To chaster, holier bliss my hopes allure.

This is not the kind of thing that people interested in a romantic, transcendental interpretation of art want to hear. Its only interest for us lies, perhaps, in its tendency, Reynoldslike, to turn away from the sensual school of Venice. I believe that the only reference to Michelangelo in all our Della Cruscans occurs where Parsons, unforgivably behind the times, says:

I ne'er without disgust survey  
 A blackguard DAVID bite his lips,  
 Or MOSES' beard that shades his hips.

Along with Parsons, John Courtenay (1794) harps on solecisms and anatomical "errors" in a way which proves how far the romantic interpretation of art lagged behind that of Italian character, poetry, and even history. He cannot forgive Raphael for the "fiddle" on which Apollo in the "Parnassus" scrapes till

Ariosto and Danté<sup>18</sup> are lavish of jeers;  
 And Tasso runs off, with his thumbs in his ears.

Courtenay had the good sense, however, to take Sir Joshua's word about Michelangelo. For him and for Correggio he can almost strike a note of awe:

What glorious vision charms the sight!  
 Coreggio pours celestial light,  
 Attendant Angels shine;  
 Inspir'd, he paints a Saviour's mien,  
 Extatic Faith glows o'er the scene,  
 And burns with love divine.

But who with Angelo can vie?  
 He rears his wondrous dome on high,  
 Pois'd in th' ethereal clime;

<sup>18</sup> Not in Tynbee.

His daring pencil boasts the art  
 To awe the eye, to rule the heart,  
 And paint the true Sublime.

In nature poetry, too, the transcendental interpretation which we are accustomed to associate with the high romanticists held off. As early as 1762 Rousseau's Savoyard vicar had found in the valley of the Po, seen against a background of Italian Alps, the text for some famous observations on the relation of God to nature; and Brydone, in 1770, had discovered any amount of sublimity in Sicilian Etna. But poets lagged behind. I do not mean they should have been pantheists, mind you; but they might have obliged us to the point of linking God at least as closely to his Italian creation as he had already been bound to Britain in the poems of Thomson, Beattie, or Cowper. All they were prepared to find, however, was beauty or savagery. It was for the former quality that Parsons loved the Val d'Arno. From Monte Secchieta, "The glory of the Apennines," he loved to throw his "raptur'd gaze"

On th' extended view below:  
 ARNO, many a Poet's theme,  
 Now appears a trifling stream; . . .  
 Here the blue Tyrrhenian lies,  
 There lofty summits meet the skies;  
 Within the vast horizon's bound  
 ETRURIA spreads, of old renown'd. . .

He was also fond of exploring "CAVA's deep glens," where "wild SALVATOR cull'd each dreadful grace." He rimed, in fact, on all the natural scenes later prized by the romantics—"Elegy on Visiting the Colosseo or Amphitheatre at Rome by Moon-light"; "Written on the Wall of a Chamber at Tivoli"; or "Ode on a View of the Grotto of Egeria and Temple of the Muses near Rome"—but never once did he pierce the painted veil. Greatheed shied away from nature altogether. Merry, to be sure, liked the wild mountains around Florence—

Amidst the dreary Appenines I hear  
 The tumbling rock increase the torrent's roar,  
 And the wide-ranging wolf  
 Howl on the mountain's side—

but that was as far as he got. In her *Observations* (1789) Mrs. Piozzi declared that she liked, once in a while, to climb "Hetruria's heights sublime" in order to

view the plains below  
From rough St. Julian's rugged brow;  
Hear the loud torrents swift descending,  
Or mark the beauteous rainbow bending. . .

Even the young Wordsworth, piercing into northern Italy in 1790, could give us nothing more than a gorgeous description of the "giddy steeps" around Lake Como:

There, all unshaded, blazing forests throw  
Rich golden verdure on the lake below. . . .  
How blest, delicious scene! the eye that greets  
Thy open beauties, or thy lone retreats;  
Beholds the unwearied sweep of wood that scales  
Thy cliffs; the endless waters of thy vales; . . .  
Thy torrents shooting from the clear-blue sky;  
Thy towns, that cleave, like swallows' nests, on high. . .<sup>17</sup>

The time, in fact, was not yet ripe for the thing we are seeking.

Some signs that it was ripening appear, however, in pictures and in prose. John Smith's *Select Views of Italy* (1792-96) shows an unmistakable fondness for mountain tops on which God's presence is attested by at least a picturesque monastery or hermit's cell, while Mrs. Radcliffe's novels do not hesitate to find plenteous traces of Him in the Latin landscape. In some of her prose, especially her nature descriptions, Mrs. Radcliffe is herself something of a poet. At all events, she is best considered along with those writers of her time who led the way in putting Italian things to poetic and imaginative uses, and prepared the way for the high romantics. All of her novels which are laid in Italy—*A Sicilian Romance* (1790), *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), and *The Italian* (1797)—show what may almost be called a preoccupation with the beauties and spiritual effects of a landscape she had never seen! While Mrs. Radcliffe did nothing in her novels to advance the contemporary philosophic interpretation of nature, this much

<sup>17</sup> *Descriptive Sketches* (1793).

may be said for her: that she applied the most up-to-date ideas to Italian landscape, and in such a manner as to really popularize what had formerly been the somewhat esoteric possession of a chosen band of poets like Thomson and Cowper. These poets had said much of the close relation of God to His handiwork, of the consoling touch of nature, of its ability to fill us with fine if indefinable longings, and its power to enable us momentarily to pierce through its painted veil to a mystic union with the Creator Himself. It was in attributing these powers to Italian landscape that Mrs. Radcliffe led the way, and not only foreran, but probably actually inspired, some of the poets of the Romantic Movement.

Everyone knows that Mrs. Radcliffe is famous for her descriptions of a country she never visited. In so far as her more "sublime" landscapes are not wholly imaginary or founded on English scenery, they rely heavily on the travel books of Brydone, Beckford, Lady Miller, and Sir William Young, on the *Select Views of Italy, with Topographical . . . Descriptions* which John Smith published between 1792 and 1796, and on the pictures of Salvator Rosa and his followers. The scenery for *A Sicilian Romance* seems to me to come almost straight out of Brydone. That for *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, laid in idyllic Venice, pastoral Tuscany, and the "horrid" Apennines, smacks of Beckford's *Dreams*, Lady Miller's *Letters*, and Smith's *Views*, which contained three scenes entitled "In the Apennines between Bologna and Florence," and a "Dogano on Pietra Mala."<sup>18</sup> That for *The Italian*, laid in Puglia, Calabria, and other wild parts of the Kingdom of Naples, was probably based on descriptions in Sir William Young (about 1773) and Brian Hill (*Observations and Remarks on a Journey through Sicily and Calabria*, 1792). Through all the sublimest Italian scenery she had ever heard of Mrs. Radcliffe caused her villains to chase her heroines. And from it those harassed girls, often in danger of losing their virginities if not their lives, always drew enough sympathy, comfort, and strength to help them prolong the exciting chase. While the heroines of all three novels drew consolation from nature, they show a definite progress in the extent of their reliance on, and understanding of, this consolation. Julia in *A*

<sup>18</sup> All four views were published in 1792.

*Sicilian Romance*, though much plagued, turned only rarely to nature, and then dumbly; Emily in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* turned oftener and with more reverential feelings; while Ellena in *The Italian* continually sought in the mountains what was, in effect, communion with her Creator.

This progression may be illustrated by a few typical quotations. The following scene from *A Sicilian Romance* is founded directly upon a similar scene in Brydone. From a boat Julia watched the shores of Sicily recede from sight, an island characterized by "wild and lofty mountains, whose steepes were clothed with hanging woods, except where here and there a precipice projected its bold and rugged front:"

Fiery beams now marked the clouds, and the east glowed with increasing radiance till the sun rose at once above the waves, and, illuminating them with a flood of splendor, diffused gaiety and gladness around. The bold concave of the heavens, uniting with the vast expanse of the ocean, formed a *coup d'œil*, striking and sublime. The magnificence of the scenery inspired *Julia* with delight; and, her heart dilating with high enthusiasm, she forgot the sorrows which oppressed her.

In *The Mysteries of Udolpho* Emily momentarily succeeded in forgetting the horrors of the castle by watching a veil of mist lift from the "wild and romantic" Apennines:

Then, the pine-forests brightened, and then the broad breasts of the mountains, till at length the mist settled round their summit, touching them with a ruddy glow. The features of the vista now appeared distinctly, and the broad, deep shadows that fell from the lower cliffs gave strong effect to the streaming splendour above; while the mountains, gradually sinking in the perspective, appeared to shelve into the Adriatic Sea, for such Emily imagined to be the gleam of bluish light that terminated the view.

. . . She raised her thoughts in prayer, which she felt almost most disposed to do when viewing the sublimity of nature, and her mind recovered its strength.

In the Alps Emily had felt even greater "awe." It was Ellena in *The Italian*, however, who really resorted to nature continually and self-consciously for uplift and healing. She could not

be kept away from the little window whence she looked down from her cliff-perched prison on precipices

shagged . . . with larch, and frequently darkened by lines of gigantic pine bending along the rocky ledges, till her eye rested on the thick chestnut woods that extended over their winding base, and which, softening to the plains, seemed to form a gradation between the variegated cultivation there, and the awful wildness of the rocks above.

Here she could endure misery, she thought, with more fortitude than among the tamer landscapes of nature, saying:

Here, the objects seem to impart somewhat of their own force, their sublimity, to the soul. It is scarcely possible to yield to the pressure of misfortune while we walk, as with the Deity, amidst his most stupendous works!

What a fine thing it was, thought Mrs. Radcliffe, for an Italian girl to have a mind "capable of being highly elevated, or sweetly soothed, by scenes of nature. . ."

Here, gazing upon the stupendous imagery around her; looking, as it were, beyond the awful veil which obscures the features of the Deity, and conceals Him from the eyes of his creatures; dwelling as with a present God in the midst of his sublime works; with a mind thus elevated, how insignificant would appear to her the transactions and the sufferings of this world!

This passage marks, perhaps, the most effectual introduction of God into the Italian landscape that we are likely to come across in this entire study. For just when Mrs. Radcliffe had prepared the way so beautifully for the appearance of a band of transcendental poets, the Continent was closed to English travel by the Napoleonic Wars. And closed it remained, except for the brief breathing spell of the Peace of Amiens (1802-3), almost to the end of the days we are studying. In England, however, the transcendental interpretation of nature grew by leaps and bounds, reaching a climax in the poetry of Wordsworth about the turn of the century. By the time the Continent was reopened in 1814, those poets to whom Mrs. Radcliffe's novels may be supposed to have given an initial impulse to deify Italian scenery

had learned a whole language and technique of apotheosis from Wordsworth. Then came the golden age of transcendental poetry on Italian scenery. But that story is not for mere students of origins.

And so we bring to an end our examination of the first boatload of imaginative literature which the increasingly sympathetic attitude toward things Italian enabled English poets to launch in the years between 1785 and 1795. The cargo was neither very bulky nor very precious. Yet it made a definite beginning. It contained a sample, however unpretentious, of every precious stuff which the high romantics were to manufacture. If the cargo was not more weighty, it was because the tide of Italian interest would not yet buoy a really impressive burden. Besides lacking the divine spark, our poets lacked knowledge. They did not have enough information about Italian character, history, politics, literature, art, and scenery to do much with them. More and more information was, however, being daily brought to English attention. In the remaining sections of this part we may chronicle those additions to already extant information about Italy which turned up while the poets considered above were writing.

HESTER LYNCH THRALE PIOZZI: ITALIAN CHARACTER FINDS  
ITS STAUNCHEST CHAMPION: 1789

Baretti had led the way in resurrecting the moral reputation of his countrymen and Dr. Moore had valiantly backed him up. But the new conception needed to be hammered home. It was still possible for travellers like Adam Walker (*Ideas Suggested on the Spot, in a Late Excursion through . . . Italy*, 1790), Brian Hill (*Observations and Remarks in a Journey through Sicily and Calabria*, 1792), Thomas Watkins (*Travels through . . . Italy, Sicily, etc.*, 1792), and the anonymous author of a *Ramble through Holland, France, and Italy* (1793<sup>19</sup>-94) to perpetuate, just as if Baretti and Moore had never written, all the old charges of assassination and adultery. Even more virulent than these was the German traveller, Archenholtz, whose book was translated by Joseph Trapp as a *Picture of Italy* (1791). Writers

<sup>19</sup> "Second Edition."

who took a mild or colorless view of Italian character were Thomas Martyn (*The Gentleman's Guide in His Tour through Italy*, 1787), the Dane, Frederik Münter (*Memoirs Relative to Naples and Sicily*, translated, 1791-92), an anonymous continuator of Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* (1793), Sir James Edward Smith (*Sketch of a Tour on the Continent*, 1793), and Robert Gray (*Letters during the Course of a Tour through . . . Italy*, 1794). Against the "poison'd nostrum" of the first and the indifference of the second group of travellers we must pit the liberal defense of Italian character made by that Della Cruscan of Florence, Mrs. Piozzi—perhaps the most thorough and famous published in the whole scope of our study. The greater part of Mrs. Piozzi's *Observations and Reflections Made in the Course of a Journey through France, Italy, and Germany* (1789) was written after she had come to know the Italians rather more intimately than in the days of *The Florence Miscellany*. As the wife of an Italian, the former Mrs. Thrale had such an opportunity to actually live with, see into the lives of, and understand Italians as was vouchsafed, perhaps, to no other traveller of these times. Allowing for a little bias in favor of her husband's countrymen, and for a wish to shame the people who had professed such holy horror at her marriage to an Italian singer and music master, we may assume that Mrs. Piozzi wrote directly out of her experience of facts. She did not have anything new to add to the defense elaborated by Baretti and followed by Moore; her contribution lay in her warmth, vivacity, and not infrequent charm of statement. Nor did her travels fail to be widely appreciated. In a bibliography of "General Works Relating to Italy," included at the end of his own travels (1793), Sir James Edward Smith wrote of Mrs. Piozzi's *Observations*: "This publication is too well known, and its authoress too celebrated, to need a criticism here. It is stamped with the character of genius, and few books are more full of ideas." To our discussion of this work we may tag a few references to other liberal-minded travellers of the time, chiefly Mercier-Dupaty, the French sentimentalist, whose book was twice translated (anonymously as *Travels through Italy*, 1788, and by Giovanni Povolieri as *Sentimental Letters on Italy*,



1789), and Arthur Young, the agriculturist, whose remarks on Italy appeared in the first volume of his *Travels* (1792).

In Mantua Mrs. Piozzi met with an incident which could never have happened in England. She was much attracted by "a female figure . . . veiled from head to foot and covered wholly in black," who "walked backward and forward along the same portion of the same street, from one to three o'clock, in the heat of the burning sun, her hand held out. . ." When Mrs. Piozzi gave her some money, she silently threw it to beggars and held out her hand as before. Such conduct would surely have been "deemed madness or mischief" in England, where magazines would have vied for the woman's life history, and engravers fought for the profits of a portrait called "Annabella, or the Sable Matron." But in Italy such instances of sensibility are taken as a matter of course, said Mrs. Piozzi, who was charmed with the notion that this person was probably "some woman of fashion who, having refused a poor person roughly on some occasion, was condemned by her confessor to try for a couple of hours what begging was, and learn humanity from experience of evil." How was she touched when she learned that this conduct was the lady's way of commemorating the anniversary of the death of a very dear friend! All the rest of the day the English traveller felt shamed by "recollecting that if this were her case, I ought to have been keeping her company (as no one ever lost a friend so dear to them as was my incomparable mother, who likewise left me to mourn her loss on this day thirteen years). . ." Of such stuff were Italian bosoms made. Who could resist this sentimental, tender, wistful, handsome, compassionate people?

As usual, Mrs. Piozzi defended the lower classes against the charges of dirtiness, laziness, and assassination. She added, besides, that cleanliness is not always the same thing as beauty; industry, as contentment. She was overjoyed with an Italian lady's reply to an English boaster's assertion that London gentlemen put on clean shirts every day and make women wash the streets before their houses every morning. "What a land of slavery!" says Donna Louisa, . . . 'but it is all done by command of the sovereign, I suppose.'" In defending Italian character from the charge of blood-

thirstiness, Mrs. Piozzi showed herself both daring and adroit. She seemed, indeed, to be tempting providence when she wrote to a friend that "A Friar has killed a woman in the Church just opposite the Crocelle inn for having refused him favours he suspected she had granted to another." Much less than that, as we know, would have sent Sharp or Smollett into a fit. But this was Mrs. Piozzi's comment: "What a miracle that such outrages are not daily committed in a country where profession of sanctity and real high birth are protections from law and justice! Surely nothing but perfect sobriety, and great goodness of disposition, can be alleged as a reason why worse is not done every day." Similar reasons were adduced by Mercier-Dupaty, a sentimental French jurist ("président à mortier au parlement de Bordeaux"), for the surprising absence of robberies in the practically policeless States of the Church. For such assassinations as continued to occur in Italy this traveller suggested an interesting justification. We must remember, he said, how badly justice is executed in most of the Italian states. We will then see that the use of the knife is "a part of the administration of justice left in the hands of the people." Passages with the knife are "the duel of the populace," corresponding to the swordplay of the upper classes. With his knife the peasant sees that he gets his due from his fellow man and from the law itself. The governments could, to be sure, put an end to this wild justice by suppressing asylums, refusing reprieves, and making it impossible for prisoners to escape from the galleys, but what would the people gain thereby? "The stiletto, it is true, makes some victims among the people, but it prevents oppressions, which would make many more. It accelerates some deaths, but it diminishes the number of misfortunes."<sup>20</sup>

As for the coldness of the upper classes, Mrs. Piozzi *knew* that no such thing existed. These people were all warmth, kindness, and candor. Living by the heart, they immediately divined the heart's embarrassment. She was deeply touched by the attentive respect paid by children to parents and by men to women—consideration such as one would not readily meet with in England. Time and again she heard Italians calling the mere servants of their

<sup>20</sup> Quoted from the anonymous translation of 1788.

friends by tender names, and speaking to all below themselves with "graciousness not often used by English men and women even to their equals." For Italian candor Mrs. Piozzi could never be sufficiently grateful, using it not infrequently as an excuse for reading her English public a lecture on affectation.

Affectation is certainly that faint and sickly weed which is the curse of cultivated—not naturally fertile and extensive countries; an insect that infests our forcing stoves and hot-house plants. . . In Italy, so far at least as I have gone, there is no impertinent desire of appearing what one is not: no searching for talk, and torturing expression to vary its phrases with something new and something fine. . . To get quit of all these deep-laid systems of enjoyment, where

To take our breakfast we project a scheme,  
Nor drink our tea without a stratagem,

like the lady in Doctor Young, the surest method is to drop into Italy. . . Restraint is made for man, and where religious and political liberty is enjoyed to its full extent, as in Great Britain, the people will forge shackles for themselves, and lay the yoke on society. . .

A British trait at which Mrs. Piozzi could not so easily smile, when contrasted with the tender consideration of her Italians, was malice. "No! let that humour be confined to Great Britain. . . [Here] the people would be miserable indeed if, to the oppression which may any hour be exercised over them by their prince, were likewise to be added the liberties taken perpetually in London by one's next door neighbour of tearing forth every transaction, and publishing even every conjecture to one's disadvantage." The English prejudice against marrying an Italian "singer" had taught Mrs. Piozzi to know whereof she spoke. Herself a lovely character, this woman enjoyed her Italian friends with a fervor which is often transmitted to the reader. I am thinking especially of her affection for the Countess Mosconi of Verona, at whose house

Lorenzi read Tasso to us of an afternoon, Bertola made verses, and the Cavalier Pindemonte conversed; where the three Graces, as they are called, joined their sweet voices to sing when satiety of pleasure made us change our mode of being happy. . . Indeed I

never saw people live so pleasingly together as these do. . . The world surely affords room for everybody's talents, would everybody that possessed them . . . but think so; and, were malice and affectation once completely banished from cultivated society, Verona might be found in many other places perhaps; she is now confined, I think, to the sweet state of Venice.

Mrs. Piozzi, herself an Italian wife, encountered very little *cicisbeism*. Such attachments of this kind as she saw she called friendships. When they overstepped the bounds of virtue, the parties had the decency, she said, not to conceal their fault. "God forbid that I should prove an advocate for vice, but let us remember that the banishment of all hypocrisy and deceit is a vast compensation for the want of one great virtue." In his Italian travels the enthusiastic agriculturist, Young, came across more than one Italian girl whose "easy and unaffected gaiety . . . would make even a farmer wish to be her *cicisbeo*." Young agreed with a Venetian acquaintance who "said that foreigners were very illiberal in supposing that the custom was a mere cloak for vice and licentiousness. . ." He sincerely trusted that the beauty of Italian women was "joined with what Petrarch thought it so great an enemy to:

Due gran nemiche insieme erano aggiunte,  
Bellezza ed onestà—"

As for Italian superstition, Mrs. Piozzi could not discover that the figures carried in processions were really treated, as had been so often asserted, like heathen idols. What a pleasure it was to a true art-lover to see Italians carry through the streets of Rome "a beautiful figure of the Madonna, dressed from a picture of Guido Rheni!"—and "no human creature in the street offered to kneel, or gave one the slightest reason to say or suppose that she was worshipped. . ." An article on the "Manners and Customs of the People in and about Naples" in William Tooke's *Varieties of Literature* (1795) affirmed that "Under a bright and always azure sky nothing is properly tawdry." It is only the presence of staring, unsympathetic strangers which turns ceremonies "intended to produce sensations of gladness, gratitude, or wonder" into exhibitions. If

you insist on attributing these "raree-shows" to the vicious idleness and superstition of a warm, monarchical country, be sure to remember, said Mrs. Piozzi, that "Fraud, avarice, ambition, are the vices of republican states and a cold climate. . ." Italian fondness for relics she justified as a proof of attachment to the kind and wonderful persons of the past. It was merely another manifestation of that admiration for ancient virtue which had lately led an English traveller to make off with a tooth from the recently exhumed tomb of a famous Roman. For her life, she could see no idolatry in the humble prayer of a person "who, at the moment a dead martyr's robe is shewn to him, begs grace of God to follow that great example. . . Meanwhile no one has a right to ridicule the love of what once belonged to a favourite character, who has ever felt attachment to a dead friend's snuffbox, or desire of possessing Scipio Æmilianus's tooth."

Real sympathy for the injured religious feelings of the Italians led Mrs. Piozzi to join her fellow Della Cruscan in resenting the model reforms of the enlightened despots who ruled certain of the Italian states. Leopold she left to her confrères while she attacked the Emperor Joseph for demolishing convents, melting up church plate, forbidding holidays, and prohibiting processions in the Milanese in 1785 and 1786. The *Observations* contain a touching picture of the unhappiness that began to "cloud the countenances of all, and justly: as such sudden and rough reforms shock the feelings of the multitude; offend the delicacy of the nobles; make a general stagnation of business and of pleasure in a country where *both* depend upon religious functions. . ." Could she have seen "these hasty innovators" erecting public schools for the instruction of the poor and putting dialect versions of the Bible into every hand, Mrs. Piozzi would have had a "better idea of their sincerity and disinterested zeal for God's glory than they give by tearing down his statues, or those of his blessed Virgin Mother, which Carlo Borromæo set up." Gathered together with two or three of her friends in Milan, Mrs. Piozzi was one day talking about "the Visconti serpent, which is the arms of Milan, and the spread eagle of Austria, which we laughingly agreed ought to eat double because it had two necks, when the conversation insensibly turned on the oppressions of the present hour. . ." To end the gloomy

subject with a joke, Mrs. Piozzi proposed that they decide the future destiny of Milan by the *sortes Homericae*. It was at these words that the book opened:

Jove's bird on sounding pinions beat the skies:  
A bleeding serpent of enormous size  
His talons truss'd; alive and curling round,  
She stung the bird, whose heart receiv'd the wound.  
Mad with the smart, he drops the fatal prey. . .

The beginning of Shelley's *Revolt of Islam* immediately comes to mind—but to talk of that would be to anticipate our story by years. The iron had to be warmed a long time before it arrived at the white-hot quality of Shelley's interest in Italian politics.

Though she did not go about exhorting the Italians to rise and throw off their oppressors, Mrs. Piozzi undoubtedly felt they were fully equal to such an exploit, should their tyrants try their patience too far. In several places she encountered remains of the ancient Roman valor and love of good laws and liberty. In the lagoons of Venice, whence Roman virtue had long ago defied Attila, she found plenty of classic courage—"the soul of old Rome has transmigrated to Venice. . ." Arthur Young decided that it was "perhaps unjustly" that the modern Italians have been reproached with "want of energy of character." Certain other writers of the time heard vague mutterings of revolution, and seem to have been willing enough to egg the Italians on. Though a great admirer of Leopold's model legislation, the French jurist, Mercier-Dupaty, ended his account of the grand duke's dominions with the ominous words: "Nothing is wanting to the people of Tuscany to recover their liberty but a tyrant; they already have a despot." It was clear to the anonymous author of *A Comparative Sketch of England and Italy* (1793), who did not have a by any means low opinion of the Italians, that "A small spark would kindle a flame amidst the oppressive misery of the Italian states"—that "An inevitable revolution must soon change the entire countenance of things in that country. . ."

Thus a high opinion of Italian character nearly always led to speculations about Italian freedom. In Mrs. Piozzi we have what was perhaps the staunchest and most affecting vindication of a

national character maligned ever since the days of Bishop Burnet and Addison. From the popularity of her book we may safely forecast that growing English interest in Italian liberation which we shall soon have the pleasure of examining.

EDWARD GIBBON: BRILLIANT LIGHT ON ITALIAN  
HISTORY: 1788 AND AFTER

At least one of the reasons why the poets of these days were not able to make much of Italian history was that they were familiar with so little of it. Though Italian literature is rich in histories, very few of these were at this time available in translation.<sup>21</sup> Still less Italian history was to be had in a native English dress, the form in which it was most likely to attract English poets. If somebody else digs up stories, tells them with animation, and underscores their color, poets may be persuaded to rime upon them; but they are seldom willing to do the spade work. As we know, very little English spade work had been done in Italian history. Cork, Robertson, and Moore are the only diggers we have encountered, and even those small corners of the subject into which they scraped cannot be said to have been thoroughly turned out. At last, however, there appeared a historian of the first importance who happened, in the daily routine of his tremendous designs, to flash several aspects of Italian history with a glamour that compelled poets to a new reckoning. In Volumes V and VI (1788) of his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and in his *Antiquities of the House of Brunswick* (published posthumously in *Miscellaneous Works*, 1796), Gibbon brought a crowd of old Italian patriots and criminals swarming back into English literature. Celebrated in his grand prose, they hardly needed, as a matter of fact, the poetical exaltation which soon began to come their way. Along with the figures brought in by Gibbon I shall take the liberty of discussing one or two others.

In his review of the desperate attempts of the medieval emperors to impose their rule on Italy, Gibbon made much of the Italian patriotism which resisted Barbarossa and Frederick II.

<sup>21</sup> Austin Parke Goddard had translated Guicciardini between 1753 and 1756; Ellis Farnsworth, Machiavelli in 1762.

Boyd had touched on the drama of these struggles in the preface to his translation of the *Inferno* (1785), but Gibbon was the man who first made Englishmen realize the important place of the tiny Italian republics of the Middle Ages in the history of democracy, valor, science, and art. Into those early triumphs of the democratic principle he himself entered with an ardor truly infectious. How happy he was to be able to tell how Milan, though burned to the ground (1162), "soon rose from her ashes" to force the haughty emperor to subscribe to the freedom of the cities of the Lombard League! He was probably thinking more especially of Milan, Cremona, or Brescia when he wrote that "as often as the bell was rung, or the standard erected, the gates of the city poured forth a numerous and intrepid band, whose zeal in their own cause was soon guided by the use and discipline of arms. At the foot of these popular ramparts the pride of the Cæsars was overthrown; and the invincible genius of liberty prevailed over the two Frederics, the greatest princes of the Middle Age. . ."<sup>22</sup> Though Gibbon approved of the papacy's resistance to the emperors, he was glad when the republican spirit of the age asserted itself in Rome in the person of the fiery monk, Arnaldo da Brescia. Arnaldo, you remember, not only attacked the *dominium temporale* of the popes, but was largely responsible, especially after 1145, for its temporary debacle. Gibbon's description of the heretic begins:

The trumpet of Roman liberty was first sounded by Arnold of Brescia. . . He presumed to quote the declaration of Christ, that his kingdom is not of this world: he boldly maintained that the sword and the sceptre were intrusted to the civil magistrate; that temporal honours and possessions were lawfully vested in secular persons; that the abbots, the bishops, and the pope himself must renounce either their state or their salvation.<sup>23</sup>

Gibbon hated the English pope who, immediately after his election, deprived rebellious Rome "of the real or imaginary comforts of religious worship," and arranged the immolation of this "martyr of freedom."

With Dr. Moore, Gibbon agreed in celebrating that venerable

<sup>22</sup> *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter XLIX.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter LXIX.



Italian patriot of the days before the weight of tyrannical oligarchy settled over Venice. All his literary skill he brought to play on his description of the last days of the warrior who raised himself from obscurity to be Doge of the Queen of the Adriatic. "Under the weight of years," he says, "and after the loss of his eyes, Dandolo retained a sound understanding and a manly courage; the spirit of a hero, ambitious to signalize his reign by some memorable exploits; and the wisdom of a patriot, anxious to build his fame on the glory and advantage of his country." After describing the fleet of the crusaders slowly bearing up to the walls of Constantinople (1203), Gibbon described in the very midst of it

the doge, a venerable and conspicuous form, . . . aloft in complete armour on the prow of his galley. The great standard of St. Mark was displayed before him; his threats, promises, and exhortations urged the diligence of the rowers; his vessel was the first that struck; and Dandolo was the first warrior on the shore. The nations admired the magnanimity of the blind old man, without reflecting that his age and infirmities diminished the price of life and enhanced the value of immortal glory. On a sudden, by an invisible hand (for the standard bearer was probably slain), the banner of the republic was fixed on the rampart. . . .<sup>24</sup>

We cannot complain that poets did not soon turn this scene into verse. They probably did not dare to challenge comparison with the prose.

To English attention Gibbon next recommended three Italian conspirators, all tinged with the spirit of republican liberty: Giovanni da Procida, Cola di Rienzi, and Stefano Porcario. With Giovanni da Procida, Gibbon was in love, and spared no colors to depict the heroism of a man who by his single eloquence roused degraded Sicily, in the days of Charles of Anjou, to a sense of freedom. "In the disguise of a monk or beggar, the indefatigable missionary of revolt flew from Constantinople to Rome, and from Sicily to Saragossa," preparing his mine "with deep and dangerous artifice."<sup>25</sup> To the conventional version of the Sicilian Vespers—the explosion planned by Procida—Gibbon added a colorful detail. The upheaval of Palermo was, in his opinion,

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter LX.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter LXII.

more the result of accident than of design. This mine was touched off by a French soldier's insulting a noble Sicilian damsel when on her way to church on the vigil of Easter. From Palermo the flame spread over the island, consuming eight thousand French, while the banners of freedom and the Church were unfurled in every city and "the presence or the soul of Procida" hovered everywhere. In 1798 that part of Gibbon's source, Giovanni Villani, which deals with the Vespers appeared in Vincenzo Peretti's *Guida alla pronunzia e all'intelligenza dell'italiano*. While no poet seems to have responded to the story's generous challenge before 1815, the tale became a favorite with dramatists later on.

In his treatment of Rienzi, Gibbon seems to have been partly inspired by Sade, of whose *Mémoires pour la vie de François Pétrarque* he was very fond. It would have been extremely odd if our historian, graced with a truly democratic belief in "la carrière ouverte aux talents," and blessed by an eye to the literary main chance, had overlooked any of the noble drama in Rienzi's story. With it, told in his richest vein, the great historian practically closed his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. The career of "the last of the tribunes" he divided into two periods. Of "the first and splendid period"<sup>20</sup> he recorded how Rienzi had loved Cicero, Seneca, Livy, and Valerius Maximus; how the loss of a brother and the impunity of the assassins had first stimulated him to criticize the corrupt government of the nobles; how this "modern Brutus" had been content for a time to conceal his high hopes "under the mask of folly and the character of a buffoon"; how the hundred citizens had held their "nocturnal assembly . . . on Mount Aventine, passed the night celebrating masses to the Holy Ghost, and issued thence in the morning to accomplish a practically bloodless revolution"; and how, at last, "the woods began to rejoice that they were no longer infested with robbers; the oxen began to plough; the pilgrims visited the sanctuaries; the roads and inns were replenished with travellers; trade, plenty, and good faith were restored in the markets. . ." With regard to the second period, he was loath to chronicle how Rienzi's "virtues were insensibly tintured with the adjacent vices: justice with cruelty,

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter LXX, from which the whole account of Rienzi is taken.

liberality with profusion, and the desire of fame with puerile and ostentatious vanity." During this period Rienzi caused himself to be knighted with the order of the Holy Ghost, feasted the Romans more like an emperor than a tribune, and had himself crowned with "seven crowns of different leaves or metals." Thus, "without acquiring the majesty, Rienzi degenerated into the vices, of a king," and "the plebeians, who were awed by the splendour of the nobles, were provoked by the luxury of their equal." Fear of the people soured his sense of justice and led him to acts of sheer cruelty—"as soon as Rienzi deserved the fate, he adopted the suspicions and maxims, of a tyrant." His fall was now inevitable. Though he escaped the infuriated mob the first time, it put a violent end to his second government, even as the "intrepid senator" stood "waving the banner of liberty" on the steps of the Capitol (1354). "Posterity," concluded Gibbon, "will compare the virtues and failings of this extraordinary man; but in a long period of anarchy and servitude, the name of Rienzi has often been celebrated as the deliverer of his country, and the last of the Roman patriots." Gibbon's brilliant story, perhaps because of its very brilliance, produced no immediate dramas, a fate shared by his account of Stefano Porcario, a kind of anticlimax to Rienzi, which he polished off with the words: "Porcario and nine of his accomplices were hanged without the benefit of the sacraments; and, amidst the fears and invectives of the papal court, the Romans pitied, and almost applauded, these martyrs of their country. But their applause was mute, their pity ineffectual, their liberty forever extinct. . ."<sup>27</sup>

Gibbon's domestic criminals, unearthed in his *Antiquities of the House of Brunswick*, differed from his political heroes in attracting poets and dramatists even before 1815, as we shall see. His examination into the origins of the royal family of England gave the historian a chance to air the malodorous past of the Italian house of Este, long regnant in Ferrara. The annals of this family were stained, said he, with three enormous crimes, and sullied by an unworthy marriage. The first crime occurred in 1293 when Obizzo II d'Este, Marquis of Ferrara and the Marca d'Ancona, a rapacious

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter LXX.

tyrant, was murdered by a still more rapacious son. Gibbon reminded English readers of Dante that this Obizzo was the same whom the poet had submerged, along with Dionysius of Sicily and Ezzelino da Romano, two torturers, in a river of blood in hell. In Dante the murderer is called, probably on account of his wickedness, a "stepson." The second crime was that of Niccolò III, another Marquis of Ferrara, who in 1425 put his natural son, Ugo, and his young marchioness, Parisina, to death for incest. Parisina's tragedy is described by Gibbon in the following exasperated, if stately, words:

Under the reign of Nicholas III Ferrara was polluted with a domestic tragedy. By the testimony of an attendant, and his own observation, the Marquis of Este discovered the incestuous loves of his wife, Parisina, and Hugo, his bastard, a beautiful and valiant youth. They were beheaded in the castle by the sentence of a father and husband, who published his shame, and survived their execution. He was unfortunate, if they were guilty; if they were innocent, he was still more unfortunate; nor is there any possible situation in which I can sincerely approve the last act of the justice of a parent.

The third crime was that committed by the Cardinal Ippolito d'Este against his natural brother, Giulio, whose eyes he caused to be put out because a lady of whom the cardinal was fond had openly admired them. Giulio's subsequent conspiracy with another brother, Ferrante, against Alfonso I, Duke of Ferrara—probably caused by his failure to get his wrong redressed—is alluded to in Ariosto, and had been touched on in the notes of Huggins (1757), Hoole (1783), and Isola (who edited a British edition of the *Furioso* in 1789). But Gibbon's was the first impressive telling of the original cause of the conspiracy. No more than the so-called justice of an enraged father could he approve the revenge of a cardinal when (1506), "under a pretence of hunting, he drew the unhappy youth to a distance from the city, and there compelling him to dismount, his eyes, those hated eyes, were extinguished by the command, and in the presence, of an amorous priest, who viewed with delight the agonies of a brother."

The marriage of which Gibbon disapproved so strongly was that

of the brother of these rivals, Alfonso I, to the already much-married Lucrezia Borgia (1501). In this marriage, said he, the "House of Este was sullied by a sanguinary and incestuous race." He was certain that a woman "who can even be accused of a criminal commerce with a father and two brothers must be abandoned to all the licentiousness of venal love." With almost too evident horror he dwelt on the story of how "at a banquet in the apostolic palace, by the side of the pope, she beheld without a blush the naked dances and lascivious postures" of fifty prostitutes, distributing "the prizes to the champions of Venus according to the number of victories which they achieved in her presence." In the *Antiquities* Gibbon did more than any previous writer to suggest what a wealth of gaudy dramatic material was to be found in the annals of the petty Italian tyrants of the Renaissance, "whose courts were perpetually defiled with lust and blood, with incest and parricide; who mingled the cruelty of savages with the refinements of a learned and polite age." Nor was English literature tardy in responding to his challenge, as we shall see.

Another terrible story of Italian domestic iniquity which came to British attention, perhaps for the first time, in these days was that of Beatrice Cenci. The first mention I can find of the subject which was to make such a literary stir in the nineteenth century occurs in Joseph Trapp's translation of Archenholtz's Italian travels (1791). The story is casually referred to in connection with the Villa Borghese in Rome, and the current indifference to it is shown by the fact that the author does not bother to mention either Beatrice's name or her father's crime:

It is a fact referring to the history of this Villa that in the sixteenth century it belonged still to a noble family which furnished a scene of horror. The daughter, a young lady in the bloom of youth and of exquisite beauty, murdered her father with her own hands, not in a passion or through provocation, but with mature deliberation and design. She was executed, the estate confiscated, and given as a present to the Borgheses, one of whom was pope at that time.

In 1792, however, the young English traveller, Thomas Watkins,<sup>28</sup> expanded this unsatisfactory hint into a lurid tale, which seems to

<sup>28</sup> *Travels through . . . Italy, Sicily, etc.*

have marked the real introduction of the tragedy to British attention. Watkins made very clear that the father, Francesco's, sin had been incest. He even averred that Beatrice's elder sister had escaped similar attempts on her body only by applying to Clement VIII. Finally, said Watkins, the seventy-year-old villain persuaded the fourteen-year-old girl to lie with him, by telling her the act was no sin, in her mother's presence! Having learned better, Beatrice, in concert with her mother, her brother James, and a certain Monsignor Guerra, hired two assassins, Martin and Olympio, to kill the disgusting viper (1598). But bloody sheets, inadvertently sent to the laundress, gave the conspirators away. After being severely racked, Beatrice was beheaded; and the Cenci property, the heirs having been emasculated, was later confiscated by the Borghese pope, Paul V (not chosen till 1605). "Never did I see," said Watkins, ending his horrid tale with a reference to Guido Reni's (?) picture of the girl, "a countenance less guilty or more beautiful."

Such stuff, then, did Italian history contain, once you dug under the surface. Tremendous deeds of republican valor vied with domestic crimes of the most fearful dye for the poet's attention. A powerful lever had been sunk in now, and soon the whole field would be opened up. Such fiddling references to Italian history as occurred in the verse of Parsons and Rogers would soon be replaced by whole books of poems and plays.

THOMAS PENROSE, HENRY CONSTANTINE JENNINGS, AND  
OTHERS: KNOWLEDGE AND APPRECIATION OF ITALIAN  
LITERATURE CONTINUE TO INCREASE: 1786-1794

After 1786 a great many new teachers of the Italian language and literature, attracted by the growing popularity of these subjects, came to Britain to supplement and replace the efforts of Baretti, Palermo, Graglia, Isola, Bottarelli, Sastres, and Povoleri. The chief among these were Giuspanio Graglia, probably related to Giuseppe, Antonio Curioni, Gasparo Grimani, Guelfo Borzacchini, Antonio Montucci, Gaetano Polidori, G. Giannini, G. Balcetti, Antonio Ravelli, and Enrico Mario Tourner. Borzacchini taught at Bath; Tourner, in Edinburgh; and the rest, apparently, in London. Curioni (1788), Grimani (1788), Borzacchini (1791), and Tourner (1794) published new Italian grammars

for the use of their students; Giuspanio Graglia (1787) issued an Italian and English dictionary<sup>29</sup> to supplement those of Baretti and Bottarelli; while both Curioni (1789) and Montucci (1792) compiled exercise books, the latter of which, *The Amusing Instructor*, we have already come across. We should also mention that Giovanni Veneroni's old *Maître italien* was again translated, probably for the fourth time, into English (1791), with the addition of "A Collection of Beautiful Passages from the Most Celebrated Italian Poets." Curioni tried to continue the critical work of Baretti in his *Istoria dei poeti italiani* (1788), but this book, besides being written in Italian, is too slight and superficial to be compared with the works of his great predecessor. Under the guidance of these professors of their native tongue, the study of Italian poetry in the original thrived as never before in England, and prepared the way for a new crop of translators who were to rival the skill and power of the old during the first years of the nineteenth century.

As for the epic poets, Agostino Isola edited Cambridge editions of both Tasso (1786) and Ariosto (1789), accompanied by good literary and historical notes. In 1789 Signor Bodoni, head of the celebrated printing press in Parma, told Arthur Young that the London bookseller, Mr. Edwards, had ordered from him two hundred and fifty copies each of "Dante, Petrarcha, Ariosto, and Tasso." In Leghorn Gaetano Domenico Poggiali edited Marino's long-vituperated poem, the *Adone* (1789; reissued later under the antedate of 1784), with British buyers in mind. This "Londra" edition of Marino, whose emasculating scenes and elaborate *concetti* were supposed by Baretti and others to have originally brought Italian literature into bad odor in England, is, I think, significant of what we may almost call the growing "rage" for books written in Italian. The opening cantos of a modern philosophic epic, never finished, by Alberto Fortis, *I cataclismi sofferti dal nostro pianeta*, were published in Bath (1786) by an English friend of the prematurely deceased author, and accompanied by an English translation. This poem on the primeval wars of fire and water showed that the Dantesque ability to turn science

<sup>29</sup> It enjoyed eleven editions by 1815.

to epic purposes had never died in Italy. Other translations dating from this time were Hoole's version of Tasso's early epic, the *Rinaldo* (1792), and Henry Constantine Jennings' *Translation of the Fifth Canto of Dante's Inferno, and of the Entire Scene and Narrative of Hugolino* (1794). Hoole translated the *Rinaldo*—a work which "has less of epic cast than even many parts of Ariosto, being, in point of wild invention, more agreeable to the sallies of Boyardo [sic]"—for those who had been charmed with the "poetical excursions" on which he had already led them into the regions of Italian "fancy and romance." Like his translations of the greater poems, his *Rinaldo* is couched in dry poetic couplets which do not give modern readers, as contrasted with their ancestors, a very vivid impression of those days—

What time the Moors, by conquering Charles subdu'd,  
Though strong in courage, weak in battle stood;  
While, stretch'd on Aspramont's contended plain,  
Lay Agolant and stern Almontes slain.

It undoubtedly contributed, however, to build up that taste in the English reading public which would soon make possible native productions on the themes of Ariosto, Boiardo, and Pulci. As for the quaint new versions from Dante—Jennings was the eccentric virtuoso whose antique marble dog Burke and Johnson discussed on 3 April, 1778—we may give a sample from the sufferings of Ugolino, of which I hope the reader is not yet too tired:

"By meer Distraction mov'd, both Hands I bite:  
My dearest Children, by th' Appearance struck,  
Thus feelingly address their tortur'd Sire:  
'If the ungovernable want of Food  
Urges that desperate Act, behold us fix't  
The lesser Ill to chuse: these hapless Limbs,  
From thee, with Flesh were cloth'd; to thee again  
Our miserable Substance we resign.'  
Effectually! thus quieted, that whole Day  
And all the next, not to awaken Griefs,  
We silent sat. . ."

In 1786 Henry Fuseli exhibited a picture called *Francesca and Paolo* at the Royal Academy, while John Flaxman published designs for the whole *Commedia* at Rome in 1793.



Critical estimates of the three great epic poets abound in the literature of these days. In his *Istoria dei poeti italiani* (1788) Curioni told Englishmen all over again how Dante was the "*Legislatore della Lingua Italiana*," and, as "Genio sublime," had created a "Poema nazionale," in which he spoke with the voice of a prophet against the violence of the popes, the cruelty of the French, and horrors of civil war.<sup>80</sup> He found traits of originality in Tasso as well as Ariosto, but clearly preferred the latter, asserting that his epic gives us all the poetic effects of both Homer and Virgil. Curioni even put in a good word for the poems of Marino, at the same time admitting him to be "il Patriarca del cattivo gusto." In the last volume of the *Decline and Fall* (1788) Gibbon praised the "sublime compositions" of Italy's epic muse, stressing "the original wildness of Dante, the regular beauties of Tasso, and the boundless variety of the incomparable Ariosto."<sup>81</sup> In 1790 Thomas Penrose, a young Oxford student, published *A Sketch of the Lives and Writings of Dante and Petrarch* in which he classed Dante, in accord with "the judgment of the learned of all nations," with Homer and Plato; and praised in this "bold, majestic, and sublime" poet "his vast and comprehensive mind, embracing at once things human and divine. . ." In the first volumes of his *Curiosities of Literature* (1791-93; much enlarged by 1794) Isaac D'Israeli spoke warmly of the poetry and sadly of the personal trials of Tasso and Ariosto. In reproof of her old-fashioned opinion of the Italians, Henry Francis Cary, the future translator of Dante, wrote to the "Swan of Lichfield" in 1792:

I much wonder that you should listen to the idea that a fondness for Italian poetry is the corruption of our taste, when you cannot but recollect that our greatest English poets, Chaucer, Spenser, and Milton, have been professed admirers of the Italians, and that the sublimer province of poetry, imagination, has been more or less cultivated among us according to the degree of estimation in which *they* have been held.<sup>82</sup>

This debt had been well brought out, you remember, in Philip Neve's *Cursory Remarks on Some of the Ancient English Poets*,

<sup>80</sup> Not in Toynbee.

<sup>81</sup> Chapter LXX.

<sup>82</sup> *Memoir of the Rev. H. F. Cary*, ed. by Henry Cary (1847).

Particularly Milton (1789); while Milton's obligations to the Italians were again reviewed in an anonymous *Comparative Sketch of England and Italy*, issued in two volumes in 1793. This work also abounded with praise of Dante and Ariosto. As for the former, said the anonymous author, "His allusions are, for the most part, beautiful, and the effort of his own genius *alone*; his descriptions are wonderfully forcible and original; and even his sublime passages are expressed in the most common words."<sup>83</sup> As for Ariosto, "Except for our own immortal SHAKESPEARE, there never existed a bard with such a comprehensive variety of beauties, and such excursive sallies of imagination"—"like the BEE, he collects his sweets as much from the slighted *Thyme* of the desert as from the admired *Rose* of the parterre." In her *British Synonymy* (1794) Mrs. Piozzi seemed to confess that while "Dante was a greater poetical genius than Tasso," she "HAD RATHER read the Gierusalemme, or even Metastasio's Dramas, than his great work . . ." For his part, Arthur Young (*Travels*, Vol. I, 1792) preferred Ariosto, and appears to have classed him among the three great epic poets of the world: "I paid homage to the tomb of Ariosto, a genius of the first lustre; since all modern ages have produced but three distinguished epic poets, what a glory to Italy to have given birth to two of them!"<sup>84</sup> The wonder is the greater, however, that the third was not of the same country."

Not far behind the Italian epics followed lyric poetry, satires, plays, and *novelle*, signalized by English editions or editions intended for English use, and sometimes by translations. Allusions to the early Italian lyrists, including Dante, appeared in the "Origin of the Italian Language, and First Poets in That Tongue," translated from Muratori in Francesco Sastres's *Italian Mercury; or, A General Account concerning the Literature, Fine Arts, Useful Discoveries, &c. of All Italy* (1789-90). This periodical also printed poems by Petrarch, Zappi, and Pindemonte. In his short history of Italian poetry (1788) Curioni, generally following in the steps of Baretti, recommended to English readers the sonnets of, among

<sup>83</sup> Not in Toynbee.

<sup>84</sup> By the second great epic poet of Italy Young may have meant Tasso or Dante. There seems to be no way of telling.

others, Tansillo, Della Casa, and Zappi; the *canzoni* of Chiabrera, Filicaia, Menzini, Cesarotti, and Frugoni; the burlesque poems of Burchiello, Grazzini, Molza, Firenzuola, and Berni; the tragedies of Trissino, Rucellai, Maffei, and Gravina; and the comedies of Machiavelli, Goldoni, and Gozzi. These recommendations were quickly followed by a really handsome load of British editions, some genuine, some printed in Leghorn with a "Londra" imprint. The new translation of Veneroni's *Maître italien* as *The Complete Italian Master* (1791) contained selections from the lyrics of Petrarch, Alamanni, Sannazzaro, Marino, and Chiabrera; while William Roscoe, of whom we shall soon be hearing a good deal, edited for the first time in history (1791) several important poems of Lorenzo de' Medici, dedicated to British "amatori della bella favella italiana."<sup>85</sup> Between 1786 and 1788 Gaetano Domenico Poggiali of Leghorn edited a seven-volume *Raccolta di poeti satirici italiani*, including, among many, Lodovico Adimari, Ariosto, Alamanni, Bentivoglio, Menzini, Sansovino, and Rosa. Each volume was published separately as well as in the series. There was also a genuine London edition of the satires of Salvator Rosa (1791). Even more ambitious than his edition of the Italian satirists was Poggiali's *Teatro italiano antico*, published in eight volumes between 1786 and 1789. This contained the best tragedies of Trissino, Rucellai, Giralaldi Cinzio, Speroni, Dolce, and Anguillara, alternated with the best comedies of Bibbiena, Ariosto, Machiavelli, and Pietro Aretino—in a word, all that was really lively in the Italian theatre of the Renaissance. A *Scelta* of Metastasio's plays and poems was edited by Sastres (1787); Antonio Ravelli brought out a *Scelta di commedie e novelle morali*<sup>86</sup> (about 1789) of the Marquis Francesco Albergati Capacegli; while another Italian teacher, Gaetano Polidori, published a play of his

<sup>85</sup> Only about a dozen copies of the *Poesie* were printed at this time, "chiefly for the purpose of regulating the text," which was to constitute an important part of Roscoe's biography of Lorenzo (1795).

<sup>86</sup> This selection contained three long comedies: *Il saggio amico*, *Il prigioniero*, and *Il ciarlato maldicente*; and four one-act ones: *La tarantola*, *Il pomo*, *La notte*, and *L'amor finto e l'amor vero*. Published in two dignified volumes, it was dedicated, "con permissione, a Sua Maestà la Regina della Gran Bretagna."

own, *Isabella, moglie di Filippo Secondo, re di Spagna* (1792). Finally, the Renaissance *novellieri* were represented by a series of new editions, mostly under the industrious care of Poggiali: Boccaccio (*Il decamerone*, 1789-90, with a *Scelta di novelle* in 1791), Bandello (*Novelle*, 1791), Ser Giovanni Fiorentino (*Il pecorone*, 1793), Grazzini (*La prima e la seconda cena*, 1793), Mori (*Delle novelle*, 1794), and Erizzo (*Le sei giornate*, 1794). Englishmen, we may fairly conclude, had begun to read Italian with a will.

As for English translation and criticism of Italian lyric and dramatic poetry, they failed, for the moment, to keep abreast of the widely dilated field of reading indicated above. Continuing to mill around the already well-defended figures of Petrarch and Metastasio, they have little that is fresh for our ears. In his *Sketch of the Lives and Writings of Dante and Petrarch* (1790) Penrose, more inspired by his own rhetoric than by any opposition to the now generally accepted position of the Abbé de Sade, insisted once more that Petrarch had loved a real woman with a passion still more real:

But say, ye cold and phlegmatic definers of love! was it to the accomplishments of the mind that Petrarch paid such tender and fervid devotion? Could such warm and enthusiastic raptures, such expressions of love (by some deemed metaphysical), be wasted on mere mental talents, however useful and excellent in a woman? It was indeed a passion as lasting as it was vehement. . .

Penrose seems to have been especially fond of the sonnets to Laura *in morte*, of whose "marvellous tenderness" he was sure that none but "the chilled and benumbed apathist," incapable of "the tender emotions of sensibility," could ever tire. He also praised Petrarch's patriotism, a passion which was of far more interest to Gibbon (1788) than his love for "a matron so prolific that she was delivered of eleven legitimate children. . ." Gibbon, indeed, devoted several pages of the *Decline and Fall*<sup>37</sup> to raising Petrarch from the rôle of "the Italian songster of Laura and love" to that of a great patriot and patriotic poet. He liked to think that it was less in honor of his poems to Laura than of his letters, orations, and love of ancient republican liberty that the Romans revived for

<sup>37</sup> Chapter LXX.

him, after a lapse of thirteen hundred years, "the title and prerogatives of poet laureate." Describing the coronation in the Capitol, he said: "They did him honour, but they did him justice. In the familiar society of Cicero and Livy he had imbibed the ideas of an ancient patriot; and his ardent fancy kindled every idea to a sentiment, and every sentiment to a passion." Petrarch's great poems of patriotism and republican freedom are the *canzoni* beginning, "Spirto gentil che quelle membra reggi," supposed to have been addressed either to Rienzi or to the younger Stefano Colonna, and "Italia mia, benchè 'l parlar sia indarno," addressed to the princes of Italy. Formerly there was attributed to him a similar *canzone* beginning, "Quel ch'ha nostra natura in se più degno," an English imitation of which, published anonymously in 1789, goes to show that Petrarch was coming to be appreciated in the rôle of patriot. This imitation, called an *Ode to the People of France*, was accompanied by the original Italian and printed in Liverpool, two circumstances which, among others, lead us to attribute it to that scholar of things Italian of whom we shall soon have so much to say, William Roscoe. More interesting than the ode itself is, perhaps, the paradoxical picture of a free-born Englishman turning to the literature of a tyrant-ridden country in order to find fitting words with which to congratulate the French on their recent revolution. From the pseudo-Petrarchan poem the author culled sentiments like the following:

FREEDOM! blest gift, whom none contemn that know;  
 Dear is thy presence to this world below!  
 Life vigorous grows where'er thy steps have trod,  
 And man walks forth the semblance of a God. . .<sup>38</sup>

Nor did the adulation of Metastasio suffer any perceptible diminution. In 1790 an anonymous writer published in Coventry *Poems Translated from the Italian of Metastasio*. These translations, said to have been done into English "without much knowledge of the Italian language," comprise all the well-known poems to Nice, many of which had already been translated by Thomas Le Mesurier. In "La strada della gloria" we learn that Nice's lover

<sup>38</sup> This *Ode*, with the Italian, was reprinted in Montucci's *Amusing Instructor* (1792).

dreamed of being ranked among the famous poets of Greece and Rome. The Muse, while reproving him for such dreams, practically assures him of such success in a decidedly Dickensian lecture on genius:

To every work let prudent thought be given,  
And leave the rest to fortune and to Heaven.

Nor did England care to differentiate between genius and an infinite capacity for taking pains. On all sides Metastasio continued to be hailed as one of the giants of European literature, both in dramatic and lyric poetry. In his *Letters upon the Poetry and Music of the Italian Opera* (1789) John Brown, the Scottish painter, proved again, as his editor said, that "the serious Italian Opera . . . is still the most perfect junction of Poetry, Music, and Action, . . . the three finest of the Fine Arts, that is now to be found in the world, and such as only can give us any idea of Attic Tragedies. . ." Needless to say, Brown took almost all his examples of opera's "stateliest and most regal argument" from Metastasio. In 1793 the author of *A Comparative Sketch of England and Italy* compared speeches from *La clemenza di Tito* and *Gioas, re di Giudea* with similar ones in *Henry VI* and *Athalie*; and declared that we cannot hesitate to give Metastasio "the first place in the first rank of lyric composition." As knowledge of the older poets of Italy grew more widespread, however, this adulation of Metastasio was to wane. His great value had been to give Italian literature a living influence on English in days when the greater poets of Italy were still contemned or only beginning to be known and praised. What seems to have been the only Italian drama translated between 1785 and 1795 was Andreini's old *sacra rappresentazione*, *Adamo*, from which Milton was usually supposed to have taken suggestions for *Paradise Lost*. This was made in collaboration by William Cowper and William Hayley in 1792. Extracts from it appeared in Hayley's *Life of Milton* (1796), while the whole was first brought out in *Cowper's Milton* (Vol. III, 1810).

By 1795, six years after his death, most of Baretti's judgments on Italian literature had been adopted and acclimatized in England, and his pupils promised to outdo the master at his own game. Practically never again would Italian literature be accused of non-

sense or the Italian language of weakness. Curioni confidently asserted in his *Istoria* (1788) that "The Italian tongue is without doubt the most flexible, the most energetic, and the most sonorous of all living languages";<sup>39</sup> while Arthur Young (1792) found it "amazing to my ears that the Italian language should have been represented as wanting force and vigour. . ." Like most of his countrymen, he had learned to perceive that it was, on the contrary, "powerfully expressive of lofty and vigorous sentiments, of the terrible and the sublime. . ."

By 1795 we have come far, indeed, in almost every department of Italian inspiration—character, politics, art, and scenery, as well as literature—from the apathy and ignorance with which we began in 1755. On every side knowledge and appreciation of all these good things were diffused and growing. But the growth had been, so far, haphazard. Before Englishmen could attain that profound affection for Italy which resulted in some of the most interesting poetry of the Romantic Movement, it was necessary, perhaps, that this thriving information should be taken in hand, enlarged, given literary vogue, and definitely pointed up for the use of poets. This important work was reserved for William Roscoe, whose lives of Lorenzo de' Medici and Leo X summed up and presented in comprehensive, skillfully digested form nearly all the knowledge of Italian history, literature, and art whose slow growth we have been tracing; added considerably to that knowledge; threw out a bait for poets; and went on to point out the lines along which future knowledge should be developed. And fast on the heels of such a clarification, orientation, and guidance of knowledge came, as we may readily suspect, power—came poetry. This last stage of our study of the origins of the romantic interest in Italy, dominated by Roscoe, covers the years from 1795 to 1811. Then came the thing itself.

But before we chronicle the achievements of this period, I find it necessary to pause for a moment to consider the products of certain doubtful eddies and backward currents in the rising tide of Italian interest. I refer to various tales and plays whose treatment

<sup>39</sup> My translation.

—often adverse, illiberal, or “Elizabethan”—of Italian character can only with difficulty be connected with the story we have just been telling. Novelists and dramatists, one must confess, have often a way of being behind the times. Literary conventions or the demands of a not too enlightened reading public hold them back. The Italian in the plays and novels of the whole period we are studying, 1755-1815, can seldom be connected with the main developments and progressive ideas of our story. It is to this old-fashioned representation of the Italian in drama and fiction that I beg the reader’s attention for a short time. This subject, since it does not serve to advance our story, I cannot afford to consider in great detail.





V

DOUBTFUL CURRENTS AND BACKWARD EDDIES  
SWEEP IN MOST OF THE PLAYS AND NOVELS  
OF ITALIAN LIFE: 1755-1815



PART V

DOUBTFUL CURRENTS AND BACKWARD EDDIES  
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During the latter half of the eighteenth century, after a long period of indifference, English plays, operas, and novels began to turn again to Italy for scenes and characters. But I am afraid we cannot connect their pictures of Italian character very closely with the steadily growing sympathy with Italy which we have been tracing. Whatever inspired the increased production of such plays and novels, it was only in very small part the growth of the humanitarian and republican ideals examined above. The English fiction and the drama of the whole period from 1755 to 1815 cannot be said, in respect of Italian character at least, to have reflected to any extent the progressive thought of the times. Perhaps these branches of literature seldom do, especially in periods when, as at the end of the eighteenth century, they not infrequently try to capture readers of all classes by means of melodramatic appeal. Those imaginative productions of the time which aimed higher—attempted, that is, to give a serious picture of the human passions in operation—did not go for inspiration so much to contemporary life as to our older literature. About most of the plays and novels introducing Italians in this whole period hangs an air of unreality which makes it difficult to think of them as commentaries on contemporary Italian character. The tragedies seem to be, and sometimes are, laid in some vague period of the past; the comedies take place in a kind of toy land; while the sensational novels are a *Walpurgisnacht* of howling bandits, pirates, magicians, and monks. Serious Italian characters speak a mild Shakespearean language, while foolish ones express themselves in broad Yorkshire. The graver Italians are usually modelled after those in the increasingly popular Elizabethan drama, while the sensational ones are elaborated according to an outrageous pattern which excludes

variability as well as humanity. We may safely affirm, I think, that from Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764) to the anonymous drama, *Gonzaga* (1814), causes other than love of the Italian for his own sake operated powerfully to resurrect his appearance in English drama and fiction. That these causes were on the whole conventional and "literary" is proved by the fact that the Italian figures in these productions are cut to patterns which hardly vary from one end of the whole period under consideration to the other. Let us briefly examine the causes which brought the Italian back into English plays and stories, and some of the typical results, before going on with what we may call our story proper.

HANNAH MORE, WILLIAM GODWIN, JOANNA BAILLIE, AND  
OTHERS: THE JEALOUS ITALIAN OF PREROMANTIC  
TRAGEDY: 1754-1815

From the realm of tragedy the Italian seems to have been practically banished ever since Rowe's *Fair Penitent* (1703), which was itself only a reworking of an old play by Massinger. His first noteworthy appearance in fifty years was made in a drama by Edward Lewis, Rector of Waterstock, called *The Italian Husband* (1754). This play, if we consider the author's source and viewpoint, makes it clear that he did not go for inspiration to Italian life itself but to the idea of Italian life held by Englishmen, especially dramatists, in the seventeenth century. It will be remembered that Jonson, Massinger, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Webster, as well as Shakespeare, though usually altered and garbled, had never entirely lost their hold on the English stage. In 1744 this lingering interest in our old drama was stimulated by Dodsley's publication of *A Select Collection of Old Plays*, containing Italianate dramas by Ford, Tourneur, Marston, and Webster. The force and baleful glitter of these plays, thus assembled, seem almost immediately to have startled contemporary writers into a certain amount of imitation and emulation. While eighteenth-century dramatists did not always approve of their flagrant violation of the unities, they were amazed at the terrible passions which their predecessors had dared, successfully, to bring upon the boards. These old plays, especially those laid in Italy, seem to have opened to them just such a view

of the tragical possibilities of human nature as the Italian *novelle* had once revealed to the original writers of these plays. Here, they thought, were effects of powder and lightning well worth imitation. The result was that Italian characters, seen as exemplars of certain strident and tragic passions, began to steal back into English literature in a day when Italians themselves were still completely despised. Lewis's *Italian Husband* is, for instance, made to turn on the horrors of Italian jealousy in a day when Englishmen as a whole believed that this eminently tragic defect had been entirely lost to Italy through the system of *cicisbeism*. How little he was concerned with contemporary Italians Lewis showed by going for his plot to Thomas Wright's old *Glory of God's Revenge against the Bloody and Detestable Sins of Murther and Adultery* (1685),<sup>1</sup> and couching his play in language which smacked by turns of Marston's tirades and Massinger's trite truths. Nor was this indifference to the Italians of his day improved on by the dramatists who, from 1755 to 1815, pierced into the field where Lewis had again broken the once well-turned earth. Never for a minute do they seem to have thought of substituting realism for reminiscence. Had they wished to use it, Baretti's account of *cicisbeism*, buttressed by Moore and Piozzi, would have made it possible for the writers who came after 1768 to take contemporary Italian jealousy seriously. But they were not writing about the Italians of their time: they were celebrating a traditional literary figure. They were determined to revive English tragedy by adorning what came more and more obviously to appear what in reality it was: a clumsy marionette, leaden-footed and stiff in the joints.

The tragedies of Italian jealousy—the favorite "fatal passion"—may be divided into two groups: that in which men, and that in which women, play the murderous rôle. In the first group fall Lewis's *Italian Husband* (1754), Hugh Kelly's *Clementina* (1771), Hannah More's *Fatal Falsehood* (1779), Robert Jephson's *Julia; or, The Italian Lover* (1787), George Moultrie's *False and True* (1798), and, conjecturally, two other plays called *The*

<sup>1</sup> Though many of Wright's tales were taken from John Reynolds' *Triumphs of God's Revenge*, the story of Count Varini of Venice was, apparently, original.

*Italian Husband* (one written in 1795, the other acted in 1812), which were not published. These anonymous works may have been connected either with Lewis's play or with a still earlier one of the same title by Edward Ravenscroft (1698), and are almost sure to have dealt with some extremity of jealous vengeance. From Wright, Lewis took not only the story but the names of Count Varini, his adulterous wife, Gloriana, and her Venetian paramour, Castrucchio. Varini's revenge is to kill Castrucchio, then immure his wife with the lover's mangled remains! It is too bad that Castrucchio did not take the advice of a friend who warned him away from Varini's doorstep with the words:

If Honour then, nor Honesty, nor Conscience,  
Nor Dread of ought hereafter moves thee, think  
Of Jealousy, *Italian Jealousy!*  
Its Watchfulness, and unrelenting Fury.

The jealous madman of Kelly's *Clementina* is also a Venetian, Palermo, a noble warrior in defense of the Republic, but the dupe of private honor. To him Anselmo, Duke of Venice, has betrothed his daughter, Clementina, not knowing that she is secretly married to a scion of a house long at feudal enmity with his own. When Palermo sees the husband take Clementina in his arms, he goes crazy with Italian fury, and challenges and kills him. In More's *Fatal Falsehood* jealousy leads the noble Italian count, Orlando, while visiting an English friend, Rivers, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, to meditate his death. But it must be understood that Orlando is goaded to homicidal frenzy by a treacherous Englishman who longs for Rivers' end. When Orlando realizes that the attempted murder would not have freed the disputed girl from a hateful marriage, he nobly turns the evil-intending knife against himself. A less excusable demon of jealousy is the Marchese Caliarì in Moultrie's *False and True*, who twice, though unsuccessfully, sets bravoes upon the life of Count Florenzi, an old friend with whose betrothed he has happened to fall in love. Caught in his crimes, Caliarì confesses:

I loved you once, Florenzi, and had I ne'er beheld thy mistress, I might have loved thee still. . . But raging jealousy tore out each germ of friendship from my soul, and planted there hell's deadliest hate!

In Jephson's *Julia Mentevole* carries jealousy to absolutely unforgivable lengths when he murders his rival, tries to murder the rival's brother, and, this criminal career having failed to excite her love, stabs the girl herself. It must be remembered that the noble character of the brother, Marcellus, takes some of the sting out of his soliloquy on the crimes of Mentevole:

I know our base, Italian, stabbing spirit;  
In the close art of murder none excel us,  
We tread the very earth, breathe the same air,  
With our old Latin sires; but, for their virtues,  
As well might eagles rustle their large plumes  
Where owlets roost, or filthy kites engender,  
As they find shelter in our dastard breasts.

A considerable number of the more interesting attempts to revive the Elizabethan dramatic spirit between 1755 and 1815 pivoted on the jealous fury of Italian women, a subject glorified in elder days by Shirley's *Love's Cruelty*, Marston and Barkstead's *Insatiate Countesse*, and many other stirring tragedies. The chief variations on this theme were played by Joseph Holden Pott in *Selmane* (1782), Lord Heytesbury in *Montalto* (written about 1804), and William Godwin in *Faulkener* (1807). When Marcius basely deserts Cleora of Mantua in Pott's *Selmane*, she follows him to Florence in a blaze of wrath; warns the Florentine princess, Selmane, against his treacheries; and tries to persuade Phalantus, another admirer of hers, to murder him, crying:

Revenge!—Revenge! in deepest characters,  
Is blazon'd on my banner!—he must wear  
Her sanguine colours who dares follow it.

To Selmane she admits:

Know, tho' I hate his base and narrow soul,  
The fascinating frenzy'd heat of love  
Still rolls its burning poison thro' my veins,  
And nothing but his blood can purge the venom.

Before she can avenge her wrong, however, Marcius's other crimes bring death upon him and Cleora retires to a nunnery. More satisfactory is the revenge which Laura Xavier in Lord Heytesbury's *Montalto* takes on the man who violates the condition on which



he has been made her father's heir, namely, that he marry her. Made to eat bitter bread by Montalto's wife, and that in her own home, Laura marries a soldier of his guard for the sole purpose of corrupting him and his brother into betraying Montalto's castle into the hands of his deadly enemy, Count Bassano. When Laura hears the enemy overpowering the weak guard of the castle, she exclaims:

Never was music sweeter to the ear  
 Than this to mine! No dying melody  
 More grateful to the love-sick maiden's grief  
 Than is this din to me. Aye! Aye! shout! shout! . . .  
 The hand that rais'd the storm fears not its fury,  
 Tho' all around the forked lightnings play,  
 And death and desolation mark its progress. . . .  
 Be true, ye Dæmons, nor defeat my vengeance!

She has the grace, it must be confessed, to be repentant when her husband and his brother, as well as Montalto, are discovered killed. Like Heytesbury's Laura, the Lauretta Delmonte of Godwin's *Faulkener* nurses her vengeance over a period of years; unlike her, the latter aims at the spiritual, rather than the bodily, annihilation of the man who has deserted her. Having discovered that her successful rival, the reputedly virtuous Arabella, has been one of the profligate mistresses of Charles Stuart, King of England, Lauretta prepares her revenge carefully. For the purpose of increasing the holocaust she invites to Florence Arabella's morbid son, Captain Faulkener, whose mother's identity and crimes have been concealed from him. On the eve of the exposure she cries:

It is well, my revenge advances!—Orsini—barbarian!—the time is come when you shall be taught what it is to have dishonoured and abandoned the daughter of a noble Florentine!

Orsini is killed in a duel by the man Lauretta has hired to reveal his shame to him; and Arabella, to save Faulkener's life from the Florentine law, is compelled publicly to confess her shame. Still another victim of an Italian woman scorned is the hero of Henry Hart Milman's "attempt to revive our old national drama," *Fazio* (1815), which I shall discuss in another connection.

Serious tragedies founded on other defects of Italian character

—pride, anger, and lawless love—were Mark Anthony Meilan's *Emilia* (1771), Mrs. Mary Robinson's *Sicilian Lover* (1796), Joanna Baillie's *Basil* (1798) and *Separation* (1804), and William Sotheby's *Julian and Agnes* (1801). The least of the offenders in these plays is Victoria, Princess of Mantua, who detains Count Basil from the field of battle, partly because her father has asked her to, but chiefly in order to show her power over men. When Basil, in disgrace, commits suicide, she is amply punished. Her fault is, in fact, of the most venial. As her nurse says of her:

My most tormenting and most pleasing charge!  
 Like vapour from the mountain stream thou art, . . .  
 Forever varying and forever graceful.  
 Endearing, gen'rous, bountiful, and kind;  
 Vain, fanciful, and fond of worthless praise. . .

Nor is the tragic hero of Miss Baillie's *Separation*, Count Garcio, too dreadfully villainous. It is true that, his present wife's brother having roughly refused Garcio his sister's hand, the count, trained to battle and revenge, secretly murdered him. But he is repentant. When Margaret discovers her husband's old crime, the soldier, stunned with shame and long remorse, wanders forth an outcast through the world, lamented by his still loving but unforgiving wife. Fortunately he arrives home, now a monk, just in time to defend her and his children against their dreaded enemy, the Marquis of Tortona. Defending them and forgiven by Margaret, if not by heaven, he is glad to die. Still another repentant Italian, his crimes all in the past, is Count Julian in Sotheby's *Julian and Agnes*. Already married, this nobleman pretended to wed the lovely peasant, Ellen, who, on learning the truth of her situation, lost her mind and health. In order to atone for his sin, Julian has become a hospitaler in an Alpine monastery, where, to help forlorn travellers over the Great St. Bernard, he continually risks his life. Among those whom he one day chances to assist against assassins is his wife, who is leading the forlorn Ellen home to die in her native Alpine valley. Mortally wounded by banditti in their defense, both women forgive him. The worst of these sinful characters is certainly Albert, the Angelolike Commandant of Padua for Mecnas, Duke of Venice, in Meilan's

*Emilia.* This villain not only makes Emilia's virtue the price of her husband's life, but, having violated her, proceeds to kill the husband and set bravoës upon the distracted woman. Fortunately Duke Mecenas, incognito, is enjoying a hunt within sight of Padua's "spires, /Whit'ning beneath the moon," and is able to guarantee her justice upon the lecherous commandant; only suicide, we must add, can secure her justice upon herself. Very little better than Albert is the unscrupulous Marquis Valmont in Mrs. Robinson's crazy play, *The Sicilian Lover*. Having begun his life of wrongdoing by defrauding his elder brother of the family estates, he seeks to crown it by forcing his daughter, Honoria, to increase those estates by marrying—in spite of her love for the Sicilian, Count Alferenzi—Duke Albert of Lombardy. For interfering with his ambition, Valmont tries to murder Alferenzi, but falls foul of Duke Albert by mistake! His career of crime is put to an end, along with the happiness of the lovers, when Alferenzi, thinking Valmont has also murdered Honoria, challenges and fatally wounds him.

From a consideration of these tragedies of Italian character it will appear, I think, that the Italian was restored to some tragic dignity during the latter half of the eighteenth century. But it is difficult to connect this restoration with the growing respect for Italian character evinced in many of the poems and travels of the period. The real cause of it seems to have been a desire to imitate the scenes and characters favored by certain Elizabethan dramatists who began in these days to return to popularity. Still, it is significant, perhaps, that the Italian, long derided for *cicisbeism*, should have again been made into a hero of jealousy; again been singled out as the best person to give certain human weaknesses the powerful emphasis, dignity, and pathos usually considered necessary for tragic purgation.

CHARLES DIBDIN, WILLIAM DIMOND, LORD THURLOW, AND  
OTHERS: THE SENTIMENTAL ITALIAN OF LIGHT OPERA  
AND POETIC IDYL: 1776-1815

One of the departments of English imaginative literature which the changing conception of Italian character may be supposed to have really affected is that of light opera. The earliest play to

suggest such influence, the anonymous *Fair Venetian*, dates from 1776, by which time Baretti's picture of Italian cheerfulness, good nature, strong family feeling, impetuous sentiment, and love of amusement had gained, as we know, a certain currency in Britain. I do not think that these comic operas, any more than the tragedies we have been considering, can be thought of as a rendering of contemporary Italian life, but I do think their rise is at least partly to be attributed to the rehabilitation of Italian character which followed the publication of the *Manners and Customs*. Though the chief reasons for their popularity were probably middle-class interest in the exotic scenery of Italy and the congruity of song in Italian mouths, these sweet-to-cloying idyls of Latin love could never have been invented, I think, until the conception of the murder-and-rape-given Italian had been to some extent undermined.

The chief of these plays on pure and ardent Italian love, usually comic operas, were Charles Dibdin's *Gipsies* (1778), founded on Favart's *Bobémienne*, James Cobb's *Strangers at Home* (1786), the anonymous *Deserter of Naples* (1788), Andrew McDonald's *Princess of Tarento* (1791), William Robert Spencer's *Urania*; or, *The Illuminé* (1802), Guilbert de Pixérécourt's *Femme à deux maris*, Englished by Cobb and Gunning as *The Wife of, or with, Two Husbands* (1803), the anonymous *Two Old Maids of Florence* (1808), William Dimond's *Peasant Boy* (1811), and the anonymous *Savoyard* (1815). The plots of these pieces are almost too shallow to be worth describing. In many of them the course of true love is carried to a successful end by means of elaborate disguises. In Dibdin's *Gipsies*, for instance, Prince Clarin adopts the dress of a gipsy and assumes another man's name in order to win Isabella of Leghorn; while in Cobb's *Strangers* the long-absent Montano, as a Turk, quizzes his apparently faithless Laura, only to find that she has "married" her best girl friend, clothed as a man, in order to discourage the advances of the villainous Aldobrand. In McDonald's *Princess of Tarento* Alphonso, King of Naples, disguises himself as a Moorish bandit in order to make the flirtatious Matilda of Tarento confess her love for Hippolito, a noble youth who hovers around her in the guise of a servant; in Spencer's *Urania* the father of Manfred, Prince of Colonna, pretends to be an Armenian wizard in order to trick the ghost-

enamored boy into marrying Urania, the flesh-and-blood Princess of Tarentum; and in *The Savoyard* young Baron Albosco assumes the garb of a minstrel for the sake of wooing Adeline Malatesta and ending an Italian family feud of long standing. Three of these operas, *The Deserter of Naples*, Guilbert de Pixérécourt's *Wife of Two Husbands*, and Dimond's *Peasant Boy*, exhibit the Italian as not only good-natured but positively heroic in self-sacrifice. In the *Deserter* Henry risks his life in order to rescue his sweetheart, Louisa, when he hears that, to avoid a hateful marriage, she has run away from home; in *The Wife of Two Husbands* Count Belfior of Sicily loves his German spouse, Eliza, with a generosity which makes him forgive her an early fall from virtue and a bandit husband—he even tries to rescue this villain from the gallows; while in *The Peasant Boy* brave Ludovico exposes his life in defending his master, Duke Alberti, from the murderous Baron Montaldi, and later saves Julian, another honest peasant of the Friuli, from Montaldi's machinations. As well as in the characters, these dramas display good nature in the writers. Though they cannot be said to have been deeply interested in the Italians as individuals, our playwrights were at least prepared to think kindly of them as a nation.

Of even less interest to our theme than the operas just considered were some which turned to Italy almost wholly for the sake of the scenic effectiveness of carnival lanterns moving on the Grand Canal, Vesuvius sparkling in the distance, or morning breaking over the Alps of Savoy. These were Richard Tickell's *Carnival of Venice* (1781), Prince Hoare's *Italian Villagers* (1797), the anonymous *Traveller; or, The Marriage in Sicily* (1809), and, probably, the following unpublished pieces: *The Fair Venetian* (acted in Dublin, 1776), *The Venetian Tale* (licensed for London, 1797), Theodore Hook's *Diamond Cut Diamond; or, Venetian Revels* (acted in London, 1797), Charles Farley's *Corsair; or, The Italian Nuptials* (acted in London, 1801), and the anonymous *Two Little Savoyards* (acted in London, 1815). Other pieces laid in Italy for similar reasons, but introducing English rather than Italian characters, were Charles Smith's *Day at Rome* (1798), the anonymous *Gondolier; or, A*

*Night in Venice* (1814), and, supposititiously, the unpublished entertainments, *England against Italy* (acted in London, 1787) and John C. Cross's (?) *Naples Bay; or, The British Seamen at Anchor* (acted in London, 1794). Such pictures of Italian character as emerge from these plays emphasize that cheerful love of innocent pleasure which Baretti had declared common to his countrymen, and which Dr. Moore had described as a "sedate sensibility to every source of enjoyment, from which, perhaps, they derive a greater degree of happiness than any" other nation. As a waterman sang in *The Gondolier* (1814):

Pleasure! Italia's sons adore  
 Thy blessed name, and hymn thy praise  
 From Milan to Sicilia's shore,  
 And songs of gratulation raise  
 To thee, who hast through many a year  
 Chosen thy sainted dwelling here.

Neapolitans, Venetians, and Savoyards, both for the picturesqueness of their respective countries and their famous skill in singing, were the favorite characters in these operas. The little Savoyard who was forced by poverty to leave his native home and wander a begging minstrel through the cold world had already attracted English sympathy by the time of Prince Hoare's *Italian Villagers* (1797). After Serafino Buonaiuti's *Italian Scenery* (1806), in which this pathetically brave little figure was both pitied and pictured, he seems to have become a stock tear-raiser in the breasts of light opera patrons. The Savoyard minstrel specialized in roundelays in praise of feminine beauty, one of which, found in *The Italian Villagers*, ends:

Where'er those eyes are brightly beaming,  
 Whose glance is found  
 To charm and wound,  
 With smiles each pain redeeming:  
 All foreign praise disdaining,  
 From you alone we seek the Bay  
 That crowns OUR NATIVE ROUNDELAY.

Naples was chiefly famous for Mt. Vesuvius and broken strains of "O, bella Rosalia" floating out to British ships at anchor. It

was Venice, of course, with her balconies, bridges, gondolas, and masking which was most popular with middle-class theatre-goers in sentimental mood. They loved to hear the gondoliers, feathering their oars across pasteboard waters, sing, as in Tickell's *Carnival of Venice* (1781):

Down by the Convent's mould'ring walls,  
Oft we hear the enamour'd youth;  
Softly the watchful Fair he calls,  
Who whispers vows of Love and Truth.

And oft, where the Rialto swells,  
With happier pairs we circle round,  
Whose secret sighs fond Eccho tells,  
Whose murmur'd vows she bids resound.

In *The Gondolier* (1814) a trio of watermen paraphrased a proverb:

At break of dawn—at fall of night,  
Thy charms, dear Venice! are the same:  
Thy loveliness ne'er met the sight  
Of those who do not bless thy name.

Largely for the sake of its conventionally exotic scenery, certain narrative poems of the period, which we may as well mention in this connection, were laid in Italy. In Edward Jerningham's "Venetian Marriage" (in the *Poems* of 1779) Camilla and Placentio were united in "Unspotted bands!" in a hermit's picturesque retreat. William Dimond used his ballad, "Lorenzo and Rosella" (in *Petrarchal Sonnets*, 1800), to describe an Italian lover hying "Down ARNO's silv'ry wave"—

Where old ROSALVA's tow'rs and garden-wall  
O'ershadow'd wide  
The darken'd tide,  
And flow'ring chestnuts wav'd, and poplars tall. . .

High o'er the wall breath'd sweet a lattic'd bow'r,  
By myrtle bound,  
And orange crown'd,  
With bands of golden fruit and fragrant flow'r.

As he whispered outside this bower Lorenzo was, alas, stabbed to

death. More happy in their loves were the Lucillio and Venusia of William Hayley's *Triumph of Music* (1804). It was

In that fair city, whose gay scenes inspire  
The simple gondolier with tuneful fire,  
To woman's height the young VENUSIA grew;  
A form more lovely nature never knew:  
Tho' young, majestic; tho' majestic, mild!  
Modestly gay, and delicately wild!

When her father tried to marry her to rich old Donado, she roused his wrath by eloping with her middle-aged music master, Lucillio. The fact that Lucillio had lost his first wife and daughter by drowning gave him a powerful appeal to her tender heart—

And grief had made him (grief severe and long)  
A mighty master of pathetic song.

Happy to say, Venusia's father, on overhearing the morning-prayer song with which they opened a concert for the benefit of a "sick shepherd of the lawn," forgave the truant pair. His first long narrative poem, *The Wandering Jew* (written in 1810), Shelley laid, for the sake of silvery convent bells, the arrowy Po, and that triad of colorful traits—Italian friendship, love, and jealousy—in Italy. Lord Thurlow, for his part, seems to have written *The Doge's Daughter* (with *Moonlight*, 1814), in which Heliadora fled from a forced marriage and saved her lover's life from the Turks, merely in order to "sprinkle some flowers of poësy" like the following about him:

Now Aurora left her bed  
And from aged Tithon fled, . . .  
And yet Heliadora lay,  
Turning from the golden day,  
Naked, on her purple bed;  
Tears, like amber, did she shed,  
And her bosom heav'd with groans,  
Fit to melt the marble stones  
That jut upon the Adrian sea. . .

The popularity of this kind of tale led William Lisle Bowles to begin his *Grave of the Last Saxon* (written about 1813) with an ironical invocation of "blue Italian skies, and summer-seas"—



Scenes where old Tiber, for the mighty dead  
 As mourning, heavily rolls; or Anio  
 Flings its white foam; or lucid Arno steals  
 On gently through the plains of Tuscany:  
 Be ye th' impassion'd themes of others' song!

However superficial the interpretation of Italian character in the light operas and poems we have just been considering, such works undoubtedly helped Englishmen to forget the old anti-Italian charges of murder and adultery, and may have operated indirectly to advance the cause of Italian independence in England. All the good which they effected was probably undone, however, by the overwhelming popularity of the "tales of terror," which we are now to consider.

HORACE WALPOLE, ANN RADCLIFFE, MATTHEW GREGORY  
 LEWIS, PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY, AND OTHERS: THE  
 VICIOUS ITALIAN OF THE TALE OF  
 TERROR: 1764-1815

From saccharine idyls of Italian life we must turn in conclusion to what were, from a sentimentally progressive point of view, anachronistic versions of Italian character. That democratic extension of literary appeal which abetted the spotless Italian loves of light opera on one hand encouraged, on the other, the sinister Italian lechery and torture of the tales of terror. The same public which demanded sugar plums one minute was calling for pickles the next. Its taste for singing, dancing, masquerading, and love-making had to be sharpened by torture, assassination, debauchery, and at least imminent rape. People wanted to be scared to death: not only shopkeepers but, it seems, staid young misses and Cambridge dons. The conflicting reports of the travellers of the period made it possible for novelists and dramatists to turn to Italy for both the commodities calculated to appease the expanding demand for literary entertainment. Opposed to sentimental travellers like Moore and Piozzi stood, as I have said, a number of petty insular *enragés* who continued to damn Italy as completely as ever did Addison, Smollett, or Sharp. It is fair, I think, to affirm that Sir William Young (*A Journal of a Summer's Excursion*, about 1773), George Edward Ayscough (*Letters from an*

*Officer in the Guards*, 1778), Martin Sherlock (*Letters from an English Traveller*, 1780, *New Letters from an English Traveller*, 1781, and *Original Letters on Several Subjects*, 1781), Adam Walker (*Ideas Suggested on the Spot in a Late Excursion*, 1790), Brian Hill (*Observations and Remarks in a Journey*, 1792), Thomas Watkins (*Travels Through . . . Italy, Sicily, etc.*, 1792), N. Brooke (*Observations on the Manners and Customs of Italy*, 1798), and J. G. Lemaistre (*Travels After the Peace of Amiens*, 1806) seldom came across an Italian man or woman who was not superstitiously licking the dust before some Catholic idol, pre-meditating some treacherous murder, or rushing to some fresh act of fornication. Adam Walker, who called himself a "Lecturer on Experimental Philosophy," insisted that he was in constant danger of being seduced by leering Italian women, who frightened him to death with "their horrid black complexions." Brian Hill, an Anglican chaplain, thought he was striking a deadly blow at a national superstition when he munched fowl in Lent before an altar to the Virgin in a tiny chapel in Calabria. According to N. Brooke, the common people of Naples, the Veneto, and other parts of Italy lived in incest, made a practice of selling their daughters' hymens, and committed murder "from a desire of pleasure." J. G. Lemaistre liked to illustrate Italian character with stories like that of a Roman widower who, too lazy to work, locked up his two small children in a room where he left them to starve to death. In *Caleb Williams* (1794) Godwin seriously advanced the idea that his chief character, Mr. Falkland, was led into crime by copying the sentiments of Italian gentlemen, the "most generous" of whom will hire bravoës to avenge him on persons he thinks too mean to call into the open field—"he is persuaded that the life of a man is a trifling consideration in comparison with the indemnification to be made to his injured honour. There is, therefore, scarcely any Italian that would upon some occasions scruple assassination."

A few poets continued to translate these calumnies into verse. In the days before Baretti's *Manners and Customs*, Goldsmith wrote a lot of nasty things in *The Traveller* (begun in 1755) against Italians, with their

Processions form'd for piety and love,  
 A mistress or a saint in every grove.  
 By sports like these, while foreign arms advance,  
 In passive ease they leave the world to chance.<sup>2</sup>

The vogue of Goldsmith led even poets who came, like Stephen Sullivan, after Baretti to find the modern Italians "a mean, degenerate band"—

Women instructed just to sing and play,  
 And men, to Cicisbè their time away.<sup>3</sup>

Even a Della Cruscan of Florence like William Parsons found, in his *Poetical Tour* (1787), disagreeable things to say of the Romans and Neapolitans:

Now sensual joys alone the stranger sees,  
 And letter'd leisure chang'd to slothful ease. . .

Similar chestnuts were roasted to death in John Courtenay's *Present State of the Manners, Arts, and Politics of France and Italy* (1794). From Rome he wrote a lot of ill-natured humor to the effect that

Th' assassin *asylums* himself in the Church,  
 And we see him in every fine portico lurch; . . .  
 With a sanctify'd phiz, struts about a sly fryar,  
 Who for killing his mistress was forc'd to retire. . .

The demoralizing effects of travel in Italy were satirized by occasional poets, the most notable being Burns, who would have no Englishmen "Wh-re-hunting amang groves o' myrtles," only to have to hasten to German spas

[To] clear the consequential sorrows,  
 Love-gifts of Carnival Signoras.

William Cowper pointed a similar moral in "The Progress of Error" (*Poems*, 1782), while in *The Task* (1785) he took occasion to give his personal explanation of the dreadful earth-

<sup>2</sup> In all editions subsequent to the first (1765) the two latter lines had their implied exhortation removed.

<sup>3</sup> *An Epistle to a Friend at Rome* (1772).

quakes which ravaged Sicily and Calabria and frightened Naples in 1783. It was on Sir William Hamilton's *Account of the Earth-quakes in Calabria, Sicily, &c.* (1783) that he based his powerful description of the destruction of "A prince and half his people." From his own tortured brain he wrung the justification of the terrible suffering at Messina:

Such evil sin hath wrought; and such a flame  
Kindled in heav'n that it burns down to earth. . .

This highly colored explanation of the age-old seismic disturbances of Italy was repeated in the preface of Thomas Maude's *Invitation; or, Urbanity: a Poem* (1791), where the author insisted that the "chastising calamities" witnessable in "the Southern States" have sprung from "a moral" rather than "a natural cause."

Not infrequent, however retrograde, charges like these furnished writers of tales of terror with motive sufficient for laying the scene of their outrages in Italy. The public demanded torture, rape, and murder, and promoters of *gruesome entertainment* in the days of Mrs. Radcliffe—the tale of terror did not become popular till the 1790's—were more than half persuaded by these illiberal travellers and poets to turn to Italy. Still other circumstances made it almost inevitable that they should do so. In the first place, Horace Walpole had gone to Italy for the scene of his *Castle of Otranto* (published in 1764 with the date of 1765) which, in time, undoubtedly fathered many of the terror novels. In this book the later Earl of Orford seems to have explored and opened up a vein of excitement of which the great middle-class reading public could hardly get enough. It is difficult to define exactly the pleasure which readers get from watching a "bloody tyrant," bent on rape, pursue a shrieking virgin through the dark, damp, and gusty cellars of an old castle. Whatever the pleasure is, numbers of people seem to enjoy it, but they also like the virgin's honor to be saved, even if only by some preposterous accident. Such a pursuit, enlivened by the occasional appearance of ghosts, Walpole suggested to English story-tellers as the ideal prescription for a popular novel when he made the wicked usurper, Manfred, Prince of Otranto, chase Isabella through the subterranean passages of his castle to a monastery where, suspecting her of seek-

ing to bestow her virginity on another, he tried to kill her. By mistake he stabbed his own daughter! At this point remorse and fate, to loud supernatural accompaniments, combined to save Isabella from further outrage. This kind of story demanded a first-class villain: a wife-beater and blasphemer, as well as would-be virgin-violator. *The Castle of Otranto* did not merely invent the ideal prescription for a tale of terror: it told just where a villain of the necessary magnitude could be found—Italy. Walpole's shining example made it almost impossible that the terror novel, once it became widely practised, should not gravitate to Italy for its ruined castles, torture chambers, ruthless assassins, insistent ghosts, and beleaguered virgins. Almost immediately he made people begin to think of Italy in terms of spooks and stabbers. When, in 1771, Lady Miller strayed from her party in the Roman catacombs, she at once began to think of spectral assassins:

I trembled all over, and perceived that my *Bongie* was near its end; . . . but figure to yourself the horror that seized me when, upon attempting to move, I perceived myself forcibly held by my clothes from behind, and all the efforts I made to free myself proved ineffectual. . . . Good God, said I, perhaps M—is assassinated, . . . and I am miraculously held fast by the dead, and shall never leave these graves.

Though probably to be attributed in the main to Mrs. Radcliffe, Thomas James Mathias ascribed the end-of-the-century vogue of the terror novel to Walpole. In his *Pursuits of Literature* ("Dialogue the Fourth," 1797) he reproved him for banishing "Learning" from England—"his Otranto Ghosts have propagated their species with unequalled fecundity. The spawn is in every novel shop."

Another book which directed the attention of sensational storytellers, on the lookout for villains, to Italy was, ironically, Dr. Moore's novel, *Zeluco* (1789). Walpole had said no more than that Italy had produced great villains in the Middle Ages; Moore amply demonstrated that she could produce them in the present. Why Moore, who showed such a high opinion of the Italians in his travels, should have made an Italian the central figure of a novel devoted to "tracing the windings of vice, . . . and

delineating the disgusting features of villainy," I do not know. Perhaps it was because, as a would-be successful novelist, he did not feel free to contradict the prejudices of a great mass, probably the majority, of English readers. Having decided to draw the portrait of a moral monster, he seems to have felt almost obliged to make him a native of a country long associated with moral outrage. The most he could do, perhaps, to spare a land he loved was to make his villain a Sicilian. I need not trace here the gradual steps by which the mother-indulged Zeluco grew from a cruel little bird-killer—"with a curse he squeezed the little animal to death"—to a hardened monster, who, after beating slaves and torturing women to death, ended by murdering his own child on its mother's supposedly faithless bosom! Another work which turned modern Italians into monsters was Lessing's famous play, *Emilia Galotti*, which was widely known in England both before and after the days of Mrs. Radcliffe. A partial version of *Emilia* was made by Henry Maty (1786); an anonymous version was performed at Drury Lane (1794); and two complete translations were published by Benjamin Thompson (in *The German Theatre*, 1801<sup>4</sup>) and Fanny Holcroft (in the *Theatrical Recorder*, 1805). According to Lessing, the only way for an upright father to save his daughter from the clutches of a raping Italian like the Prince of Guastalla is to kill her. In order to get Emilia into his hands, Guastalla has her abducted from her wedding party, and her husband murdered. Shrieks the Countess Orsina, one of the prince's discarded mistresses, as she watches him carry Emilia into his den: Soon she also will be forsaken—then another—another—and another. Ha! (*As if in rapture.*) What a celestial thought! When all who have been victims of his arts shall form a band—when we shall be converted into Demons—Furies—what transport will it be to tear him piecemeal, mangle his limbs. . .<sup>5</sup>

Still another German work which probably led the English terror novelists to Italy in search of villains was Schiller's *Geisterseher*, a fragment first published in book form in 1789 with a spurious continuation by E. F. Follenius. The fragment was

<sup>4</sup> The separate title-page bears the date, 1800.

<sup>5</sup> Thompson's translation (1801).

first turned into English by Daniel Boileau as *The Ghost-Seer* (1795), while the whole was translated by Wilhelm Rander as *The Armenian* (1800). This work seems to have given English writers the notion that Italians often love to torture souls as well as bodies, and men as well as women. In the novels which derive from Schiller the Italians are often literally, as well as figuratively, devils who seek, by appearing to their victims in weird oriental garments, poisoning their morals with mysterious predictions, and subverting their reason by brilliant enchantments, to ruin their souls. Schiller's idea in *Der Geisterseher* seems to have been to trace the extraordinary lengths to which Italian inquisitors will go to break an upright German soul, and send it, if it fails to embrace Catholicism, to hell. There is good reason for thinking that the mysterious Armenian, in Schiller's notion, was not really the devil, but merely a Neapolitan magician—modelled on the Count of Cagliostro, at the height of his hoaxing career in the 1770's—whom the inquisitors employed to undermine the Protestantism of the gloomy German Count von O\*\*. By shaking the count's faith in physical and moral truth, the Inquisitors hoped to lead him into fornication, blasphemy, and even murder. Then they expected him, his austere soul eaten by remorse, to take refuge in the only Church which can guarantee remission of sin, and will remit it—if made heir to a German principedom! But just as the inquisitors began to draw in their carefully laid nets, Schiller dropped his story, apparently ashamed of the puerility of his theme or of the calumny it cast on Italian character. In developing this story of the destruction of a soul, Follenius revealed the Armenian as an Italian hypnotist, motivated more by an intense personal desire to persecute a human mind than by a wish to please the Inquisition.

When Mrs. Radcliffe came to write her *Sicilian Romance* (1790)—the novel which seems to have initiated the vogue of the tale of terror—she had, then, several sources on which to draw for virgin-chasing, ghost-raising, and soul- and body-torturing Italians. Principally she followed Horace Walpole, but with this difference: that she always made her supernatural effects susceptible in the end of natural explanation. In this novel she dwelt on a depth of Italian woman-persecution not quite plumbed in

*The Castle of Otranto*. In order to "marry" a second wife, the Marquis of Mazzini buried his first in effigy, while really confining her in the deserted south wing of his castle, where, with the help of a trusty servant, he fed her on bread and water for many years. At last, the secret of the south wing threatening to come out, this man of furious "passions, unaccustomed to resistance," went so far as to poison his long-tormented wife's pittance of food. Just before she had time to touch it, however, she was rescued from her dreary cell. Other people persecuted by Mazzini, either for the sake of the flagitious Maria de Vellorno, who deceived him right and left, or for power and prestige, were his son, Ferdinand, and his daughter, Julia. This latter he insisted on marrying to a counterpart of himself, the Duke de Luovo, who had already driven two wives to the grave and a son into the arms of bandits. The pursuit motive of this novel is furnished by Julia's flight from Luovo, protracted through all the Sicilian scenery of which Mrs. Radcliffe had ever read. Though Julia's virginity was once endangered by taking refuge with a godless *abate*, it is hardly necessary to add that it was never rifled by the duke. The various problems of this novel were brought to a fortunate end when the count's paramour, discovering that she had been tricked into a lawless marriage, poisoned Mazzini and stabbed herself. At least two plays may be traced to this novel: Henry Siddons' *Sicilian Romance* (1794) and Miles Peter Andrews' *Mysteries of the Castle* (1795). Both deal, essentially, with the Luovo-Julia episode, Mazzini's villainies being imputed to Luovo. In the first, Ferrand, Marquis of Otranto, incarcerates his wife in order to marry a certain Alinda, who is saved, however, by the customary flight and by the fact that the uncle of the imprisoned marchioness comes to the rescue with an army. In Andrews' play the wife-incarcerating count, here called Montoni,<sup>a</sup> manages to lay hands on the fleeing Julia, but is prevented from rape by the timely aid of her lover, Carlos, who discloses the fact that Montoni has at least one spouse, more probably several, interred in his multiple dreary dungeons!

In her next romance, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Mrs.

<sup>a</sup> See *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794).



Radcliffe went so far as to allow an Italian husband, the *condottiere* Montoni, to actually harass and torture his respectable, if silly, French wife to death before, as it were, the reader's eyes. Having accomplished this long and bloody business, Montoni, always in search of money, turned his attention to her niece, the heiress Emily. From this unprincipled demon, who in pursuit of "interest or ambition" was "equally a stranger to pity and to fear," Emily managed to escape, of course, just in time. Another torturer introduced in this tale was the erstwhile possessor of the gusty castle in which Montoni disposed of his victims, Laurentini di Udolpho. This hot-blooded girl, after giving herself to the travelling Marquis de Villeroi, suffered, when he married in France, "all the delirium of Italian love"; and forced him to dispose of his wife, another of Emily's unfortunate aunts, with slow poison. Montoni, we may note with satisfaction, was apprehended with his lawless band as an enemy of the state of Venice, itself a secret racker, while Laurentini *tried* to cleanse her conscience by retiring to a nunnery. A drama founded on a selection of these crimes was Ferdinand Fullerton Weston's operatic *Castle of Udolpho* (1808).

In her last and perhaps most ambitious effort to frighten readers to death by means of a Latin torturer, Mrs. Radcliffe signaled for the job a monk, Schedoni, in honor of whom she named the novel *The Italian* (1797). To his business of persecuting the young lovers, Ellena Rosalba and Vincentio di Vivaldi, Schedoni came well prepared by the former murder of a brother. Jealous desire for his wife had been the motive. The fact that Ellena Rosalba happened to be the offspring of that hated marriage, much resembling her mother, was the only thing which saved her, on one occasion, from Schedoni's own knife. By murdering Ellena the ambitious monk had hoped to persuade the vindictive Marchioness di Vivaldi, who would not countenance her son's marriage with the poor girl, to raise him to the head of his order, the Black Penitents. It was in the confessional itself that Schedoni first suggested the crime to the marchioness, while his face became "more terrible than usual, and overspread with a dark, cadaverous hue of mingled anger and guilt." His persecution of the marchioness's

son, Vincentio, whom he caused to be entrapped into the dreadful dungeons and ordeals of the Inquisition, was motivated entirely by personal hatred for the boy. Both his young victims, caught after arduous pursuit, escaped him at the end when, his fratricide coming to light, he himself fell a prey to the inexorable engine which he had set in motion against Vincentio. Both James Boaden's opera, *The Italian Monk* (1797), and a spectacle called *The False Penitent; or, The Monk of Palluzzi* (1805) were founded on this novel. By suppressing Schedoni's fratricide and making Rosalba his daughter rather than his niece, Boaden managed a happy ending for a play from which all Mrs. Radcliffe's mysterious horror has vanished. The following song is sung by a chorus of banditti:

Hark, the night crow shrieks for food!  
Wolves are howling in the wood!  
To the cottage clowns retire,  
And quake around the scanty fire.  
Then we track the gloomy way,  
Lurking to ensnare our prey.  
'Tis he, stand close. Strike by surprize.  
What light's that? 'Tis the fire-gnat flies.  
Now then, take aim! He falls, he dies.

The plethora of terror novels which came after Mrs. Radcliffe usually did little but weave variations on her favorite themes of wife-, virgin-, rival-, and enemy-torture. Once in a while, in contrast to Mrs. Radcliffe's practice, the torturer was endowed, like Schiller's Armenian, with certain magical or supernatural gifts, or even identified with the devil. Favorite torturers were adulterous Italian marquises, robber chiefs, pirates, and prurient priests. In the hands of the terror novelists Italian character was simply torn to shreds, and it often seems as if their vogue must surely have damaged, if not actually overthrown, the good work of the sentimental travellers. As the Reverend John Chetwode Eustace wrote in his *Tour through Italy* (published in 1813, but probably composed rather earlier):

Is a scene of lewdness or debauchery to be introduced into a Romance? It is placed in an Italian convent. Is an assassin wanted to

frighten ladies in the country, or to terrify a London mob on the stage? An Italian appears: a monk or friar probably, with a dose of poison in one hand and a dagger in the other. . . . These misrepresentations, absurd and ill-founded as they are, have been inserted in so many books of travels, and interwoven with so many popular tales, that they have at length biassed public opinion, and excited a distrust and antipathy toward the Italian nation.

Let me try to summarize very briefly the plots of the chief tales of terror whose scene was laid in Italy. In John Fox's *Santa-Maria; or, The Mysterious Pregnancy* (1797) the lecherous Count di Contarini succeeded—marvel of marvels!—in really violating his victim, Santa-Maria, a relative, whom he drugged on her wedding eve. The reader will be glad, of course, to hear that this raper was finally hung for "murder, sacrilege, and incest." In the anonymous *Count di Novini* (1799) the hypochondriac count's enemy, Gonsalvo di Rinzambo, chose to prey upon his mind rather than merely upon his life. A few of Gonsalvo's torture devices included seducing a girl, Juliet, by using Novini's name; adopting the guise of a Carthusian monk in order to convince Novini of sins he had never committed; poisoning his mind against his own child; and persuading him, in the end, to adopt Gonsalvo's bastard for his heir! As a study in the psychology of the abnormal, *The Count di Novini* seems to me to be not only unique among the superficial terror novels, but far in advance of most of the fiction of its time. In Mrs. Anne Ker's *Heiress di Montalde* (1799) the young Count di la Rosa showed a considerable improvement over his father—whose wife had cut her throat "to free herself from a tyrant whose cruelty, avarice, and injustice knew no bounds"—by merely scolding his "bride," Palmira, joying in the death of her baby, and wishing for her demise. When Di la Rosa turned out to be happily (!) wedded to the local castle specter, Palmira discovered that he had pretended to marry her only in order to avoid his father's curse. More sharp and realistic in tone than any of these novels was Francis Lathom's *Mystery* (1800), in which Antonia, conceiving herself to have been deserted by the Marquis di Marvaldi for her better-tempered sister, swore on an altar of the Church itself an awful oath of

vengeance: first, to defile herself in order to disgrace her brother-in-law; second, to marry a man of his own rank without the lure of any such dowry as the marquis had offered to put up for her; and, third, these things done, to put a violent end to the life of the marquis. Sir Charles Melford, who acted as the unsuspecting weapon by which she made her triple vow come true, could only exclaim: "Methinks to her the pictured mother of Hamlet was an angel. . ."

Mary Charlton's *Pirate of Naples* (1801) returned to the old theme of the beleaguered virgin. Balestra lusted after Angela and tried to sell her to the Turks; Cesario d'Ossima sought to punish in her the supposed criminality of her mother; while her putative father, Lazagna, the dreadful pirate of Naples, threatened her life through hate and fear of the other two. The "pursuit" led through a pair of nunneries, the catacombs of Naples, a sea fight, imprisonment on a desert island, and incarceration in a dungeon before Angela's life and virginity were definitely put out of danger by the discovery that she was the daughter of Don Cesario himself. Dungeons also figured prominently among the varieties of torture with which the jealous Lorenzo di Rozizzi in Mary Julia Young's *Kinsmen of Naples* (1803) harassed his half-English cousin, Frederic Duvalvin. Lorenzo is about the only one of our torturers who, by suffering a change of conscience, turned out well in the end. Mrs. Byrne's *Zofloya; or, The Moor* (1806) offers an interesting variant of the beleaguered virgin theme by turning the victim into a maiden knight. In this novel Victoria Loredani, through a mixture of love and hate, pursued and violated, by the use of supernatural means, a noble young bandit. We are given to understand that Victoria sold her soul to the mysterious Moor for the drug which made Henriquez mistake her for his true love, Zilla, and made him, when it wore off, commit suicide. Zofloya, who turned out to be "SATAN" himself, was the true villain of the novel. In contrast to him, the miscreant of Mrs. Byrne's *Libertine* (1807), Angelo, Count d'Albini, was more definitely Italian (though half-English!) and infinitely more human, suggesting Dr. Moore's Zeluco. Angelo's desire to torture a good but weak-willed woman by neglecting to marry her ended (*caveat homo*

*dissolutus*!) in his assassination of their illegitimate daughter's seducer, his inadvertent betrayal of their illegitimate son to the gallows, and delirious suicide. The heartless Marquis de C\*\*, Regent of Tuscany, in Benjamin Thompson's *Florentines* (1808) was clearly modelled on Lessing's Prince of Guastalla: after raping Amelia, this monster caused her father, Salviati, whose revenge he feared, to be burned to death in the ruins of his ancestral home.

Both Shelley's *Zastrozzi* (1810) and *St. Irvyne* (1811), as everyone knows, relied heavily for their effect on the introduction of a more or less supernatural tormentor. Except for the fact that Zastrozzi hated Verezzi for personal reasons, he stands in relation to his death much as Zofloya, the Moor, to that of Henriquez in Mrs. Byrne. By making Verezzi believe in the death of his true-love, Julia, Zastrozzi drove him into the arms of a woman he hated, Matilda. When Julia turned up alive in Venice, Verezzi, like Mrs. Byrne's hero, after whom, as has often been pointed out, he was obviously modelled, committed suicide. In *St. Irvyne* the cursed Ginotti tried to make Wolfstein, the son of a German noble, relieve him of his fatal gift of the *elixir vitae*. After spurring him into the arms of the beautiful Megalena di Metastasio—a girl who could be won only by the murder of the bandit chief, Cavigni, and worshipped only at the price of the suffering and suicide of Olympia della Anzasca—Ginotti called on Wolfstein to renounce God and receive eternal life on earth. On his refusal, Satan brought death to both. Another way in which Ginotti persecuted Wolfstein was by seducing, under the name of Nempere, his sister, Eloise de St. Irvyne, and selling her to an Englishman, Mountfort. In contrast to Shelley's tales of terror, Anne Hatton's *Sicilian Mysteries; or, The Fortress de Vechii* (1812) again offered a maiden for potential slaughter. This time the villain was a wicked uncle, Manfredi di Montalti, who, after murdering his elder brother and immuring his sister-in-law, sought to insure his possession of the ancestral lands by doing away with his niece, Viola. As usual, however, the heroine was miraculously saved from the snares of her uncle's agents, the murderous monk, Benvolio, and the abandoned "abbadessa," Corinna Mazzini. Almost exactly similar motives led the Marquis Barozzi to persecute his niece, Rosalina, in Mrs. Catharine Smith's *Barozzi; or, The Venetian Sorceress* (1815). In

contrast to the usual milk-and-water heroines of these tales, Rosalina saved her own throat by assuming "the arduous and dangerous character of the Sorceress Magdalena." In this rôle she bullied the bravoës of Venice, and frightened her wicked uncle, into sparing her real self! In addition to these novels, it is fair to imagine that the following books, which I have seen advertised or reviewed without having been able to come across examples of them, contained a tithe of torturers: Anna Maria Mackenzie's *Neapolitan; or, The Test of Integrity* (1796), Mrs. Mary Meeke's *Sicilian* (1798), the anonymous *Cavern of Strozzi* (1800), the anonymous *Eve of San-Pietro* (1804), the anonymous *Valombrosa; or, The Venetian Nun* (1805), "Anna Matilda's" *Italian Marauders* (1809), the anonymous *Rosalie; or, The Castle of Montalabretti* (1811), Edward Montague's *Demon of Sicily*, T. J. Horsley Curties's *Monk of Udolpho*, the anonymous *Isadora of Milan*, and so on, and so on.

In this connection two German terror novels deserve to be mentioned, both on account of the English popularity they enjoyed, and because they had some influence in transforming the Italian banditti who came after 1815 into Robin Hoods. Both *The History of Rinaldo Rinaldini* (1800), translated by John Hinckley from Christian August Vulpius, Goethe's brother-in-law, and *The Bravo of Venice* (1805), translated by "Monk" Lewis from the *Abällino* of J. H. D. Zschokke, treat the reader to all the cold sweats of the regular terror novel at the same time that they vindicate the motives of the terrorists. Rinaldini's lightnings, for instance, were loosed only upon those who had injured him, and his whole life was redeemed by his desire to save Corsica from her French persecutors. He had been raised up, as a matter of fact, for this noble purpose by a tutor, Onorio, who fed him on "Plutarch's Lives, Livy, . . . Quintus Curtius, books of knight errantry, and the Italian historians." The mysterious magician with whom nearly every Italian bandit had to be in league was, in the case of Rinaldini, no other than his old preceptor, who once addressed an outlawed band of would-be saviors of Corsica:

"Pure as the wax and flame of these candles is the view of all those who are here assembled together, resolved to tread the soil of a country which, when manured with the blood of its tyrants,

will yield us a rich harvest of fame. We sow and reap for the oppressed. We are the husbandmen of fame and justice."

Captured by the Neapolitan police just when he was about to liberate suffering Corsica, Rinaldini, the pupil of Plutarch, was saved from disgrace by Onorio's dagger! More successful in helping an unhappy country was Abällino, the Bravo of Venice. This terrible man murdered all his brother banditti and, alone, terrified the senate and doge of Venice. In the end he turned out to be, however, a kind of professional conspiracy-detector, who had rid Venice of robbers for the express purpose of forcing dangerous conspirators against the state to apply to a bravo especially employed to give them away. Vulpius's novel gave rise to a "Grand Ballet of Action" by John C. Cross called *Rinaldo Rinaldini; or, The Secret Avenger* (acted, 1801); while Zschokke's gaudy romance inspired no less than three dramas—"Monk" Lewis's *Rugantino* (1805), Robert William Elliston's *Venetian Outlaw*<sup>7</sup> (1805), and James Powell's *Venetian Outlaw, His Country's Friend*<sup>8</sup> (1805)—and a ballet, *Abelino; or, The Robber's Bride* (1805).

The lurid lusts and tortures of the terror novels seem to have been reflected in a whole body of sixpenny chapbooks, most of which have perished. Sometimes these were mere résumés of the at least two- and often five-volume novels which I have outlined above. Thus *The Midnight Assassin; or, Confession of the Monk Rinaldi* (about 1802) was nothing but a condensation of Mrs. Radcliffe's *Italian*, the names of the three chief characters being changed to Rinaldi, Amanda, and Di Sardo; *The Dæmon of Venice* (1810) was founded on Mrs. Bryne's *Zofloya*; and *Rugantino* (about 1810) was, apparently, Lewis's own compression of *The Bravo of Venice*. Among the anonymous chapbooks which I have come across are *The Secret Oath* (1802), *The Heiress of the Castle of Morlina* (1802), *The Story of Shabraco and Sabrina* (published with the preceding, 1802), *The Banditti of Monte Baldo* (1805), and *The Affecting History of the Duchess of C\*\*\*\** (about 1810). *Lisette of Savoy* (1804) and *The Castle of Monta-*

<sup>7</sup> Founded on the French translation of *Abällino*.

<sup>8</sup> Founded on a French play by René Charles Guilbert de Pixérécourt.

bino (about 1815) were written by Sarah Wilkinson, while the name of Isaac Crookenden stands over "The Distressed Nun; or, Sufferings of Herselia di Brindoli of Florence" (published in *Romantic Tales*, 1802) and *Horrible Revenge; or, The Monster of Italy!!* (1808). Many of these sixpenny tales had crude, hand-colored frontispieces, showing assassins in the act of either plunging or withdrawing their cursed blades. How closely these chapbooks followed the themes of the longer romances will appear from a brief outline of two or three of them. In *The Heiress of the Castle of Morlina; or, The Domains of Isabella di Rotaldi Restored: and the Usurper Secluded* Raymond di Montaldi, motivated equally by greed and jealousy, murdered his brother and brought up the niece as his own child. On her becoming a woman, Raymond was stricken with a fatal lust, leading to a wild pursuit which ended only when he at last cornered his victim in a boat on the Tyrrhene Sea. Just when he was about to commit the rape, however, the ship was boarded by Turkish pirates who restored the fainting Isabella to her ancestral domains!<sup>9</sup> *Shabraco and Sabrina* told of a wicked priest who, taken with the charms of a fair parishioner, murdered her husband. He could not prevail on the wife, however, even by sixteen years of subterranean torture, to yield her body. Just as this priest, become a dangerous bandit, decided to kill her in cold blood, her now grown-up son, led by fate to the shores of Calabria, rescued her! In *The Banditti of Monte Baldo; or, The Lass of the Lake* (1805) the runaway nun, Constantia, was confined in a deserted tower to shield her (*mirabile dictu!*) from two "unrelenting persecutors": a ferocious father and a Church which had sentenced her to be "immured between four stone walls, and starved to death." Julien de Pionori, the monster of Italy in Crookenden's *Horrible Revenge*, began his "fatal career" by breaking his mother's heart, carried it forward by attempting to rape his sister, and "crowned [it] with parricide!" The villainous count in Wilkinson's *Castle of Montabino* either tortured, or tried to murder, or exposed to death, one wife, one mistress, two nieces, and three natural children. I could also tell you how and why the

<sup>9</sup> This chapbook seems to have been founded on Mrs. Eliza Parsons' *Castle of Wolfenbach, a German Story* (1793).



Duchess of C\*\*\*\* was "confined nine years in a horrid dungeon under ground," but of this kind of thing there is no end.

I cannot conclude my account of these terror tales, however, without at least mentioning two or three of the gruesome *guignols*, often mere anonymous stage spectacles, to which they gave rise. Such, usually not preserved to us in printed form, were John C. Cross's *Genoese Pirate* (1798), Charles Isaac Mungo Dibdin's *Great Devil . . . of Genoa* (1801), the same writer's pseudohistorical *Council of Ten* (1811), and the following anonymous productions: *Manfred* (1803), *The Neapolitan Pirate* (1807), *The Italian Gamester* (1810), and *Bobinet the Bandit* (1815). More pretentious dramatic horrors in the mood of the terror novels were "Monk" Lewis's *Venoni; or, The Novice of St. Mark's* (1809), adapted from Boutet de Monvel, and an anonymous drama called *Gonzanga* (1814), first printed in *The New British Theatre*. In the first Father Coelestino persuaded a superstitious Neapolitan marchioness to confide her daughter to the care of an Ursuline convent, where she was surrounded with "seductions of such enchanting power as might have thawed the frozen bosom of Chastity herself," and delivered up to the abbot's lust. But not even chains and pulleys, as we may imagine, were able to shake the heroine's defense of her maidenhead before her truelove arrived with the police. In *Gonzanga* the wicked count from whom the play was named, having usurped his brother's property by confining him in one of those ubiquitous Italian dungeons, tried to murder a milkmaid for having distracted his son from a rich match, muttering:

Blaze on, ye streamy flames of vivid glare!  
And light my bark o'er that red sea of death  
Where to recede is sure perdition!  
Demons of Homicide! on whose breath rides  
The blasting mildew and foul pestilence,  
Swell all my sails! let furies steer my helm!

Such were the tales of terror which threatened for a time to sidetrack the sentimental-liberal interpretation of Italian character which Baretti, Moore, Piozzi, and others had taken such pains to build up.

Because the treatment of the Italian in the English tragedies, light operas, and terror novels of the period from 1755 to 1815 did not seem to me vitally connected with that growth of English interest in Italy which we have been studying, I have chosen to consider it separately as an element of decidedly doubtful tendency and value. Just what these imaginative portraits of the Italian were worth in advancing or retarding the cause of a liberal and sympathetic understanding of the Italian nation, I am not prepared to say. Certainly the sentimental Italian of light opera was far overshadowed by the vicious Italian of the tale of terror, and the good which may be supposed to have been done in one instance was almost certainly obliterated by the harm done in the other. It is entirely possible, however, that neither the theatrical nor fictional treatments of Italian character weighed much with the thoughtful Englishman. These were, as I have hinted, viands largely cooked to order for the consumption of the great lower middle class, whose childish tastes began in the latter part of the eighteenth century to subject the theatre and the novel to a domination from which they will never, perhaps, be able to free themselves. This much we may take for granted, I think: that very few intelligent people allowed a conception of the Italian founded on the travels of Moore and Piozzi to be overturned by Mrs. Radcliffe and her imitators. The vogue of the terror novel itself definitely declined after 1810, nor did many travellers seek after that date to give such sensational fiction even the slightest semblance of basis in fact. Only the nameless writers of chap-books, catering to the grossest tastes, were proof against the admonition of the kindly traveller, Eustace: "The authors of these *Tales of Terror* ought to recollect that in amusing the imagination, they are not allowed to pervert the judgment; and that if it be a crime to defame an individual, it is aggravated guilt to slander a whole people."



VI

ENGLISH INTEREST IN ITALY COMES  
FULL TIDE: 1795-1811



PART VI

ENGLISH INTEREST IN ITALY COMES  
FULL TIDE: 1795-1811

At least one reason why the Della Cruscans of Florence and their compeers did not write more impressively of Italy was, as we said before, that they did not really know very much about Italian literature, art, history, character, and politics. The province of the present chapter will be to study how the years from 1795 to 1811 brought forth just such fresh information as was necessary to round out the picture we have been slowly filling in; just such spurs to sympathy as were needed to make common to most enlightened Englishmen what we have seen to be the possession of a chosen few. The forces which accomplished these desirable results were chiefly twain: the advent of William Roscoe with his biographies of Lorenzo the Magnificent and Leo X, and the continued presence in Italy of England's hated enemy, Napoleon. The first, *per se* and by exciting emulation, enabled Englishmen to tramp around in the great fields of Italian history, art, and literature almost as familiarly as in their own cultural gardens; the second gave them a sympathy with Italian character and political emancipation based on no less powerful emotions than fear and hatred of a common enemy. By the end of this chapter we shall have set the stage for the coming of the great romantic poets, and our study will be hastening to its close.

JOHN CHETWODE EUSTACE, HENRY TRESHAM, WORDSWORTH,  
AND OTHERS: THE PRESENCE OF NAPOLEON IN ITALY  
RIPENS ENGLISH SYMPATHY FOR ITALIAN  
CHARACTER AND POLITICAL INDE-  
PENDENCE: 1795-1810

Except for the short period of the Peace of Amiens (1802-3), England's enmity to France operated to keep the British out of

Italy from 1795 to 1815. Had they been able to travel, it is almost certain that we should have had a series of liberal interpretations of Italian character in the spirit and tradition of Baretti and Moore. If we may judge by the most important of the travellers of 1802, the Reverend John Chetwode Eustace, these liberal interpretations would have been stamped with a serious feeling and nobility of conception not to be found even in Mrs. Piozzi. Two circumstances, among others, would have accounted for this attitude: first, the French Revolution, which had stimulated a belief in the principles of Liberty for all, Fraternity amongst men and nations, and Equality of virtues and talents; second, Napoleon's repeated conquests of Italy, which exposed her people to the tyranny of a man whom England hated with a hate sometimes made frantic by fear. Involuntarily and in great numbers Englishmen were drawn into sympathy with a nation suffering from the sword which hung over their own heads, and were prompted to take the kindest view of its character.

Amongst those travellers whose books were published between 1795 and 1811, John Owen (*Travels into Different Parts of Europe*, 1796) and J. G. Lemaistre (*Travels after the Peace of Amiens*, 1806) seem to have been the only Britons who clung to an unfavorable view of Italian character. Other old-fashioned Italian travellers whose books were published in England were two Americans, Robert Semple (*Observations on a Journey through . . . Italy*, 1807) and Joseph Sansom (*Travels from Paris through . . . Italy*, 1808<sup>1</sup>), and a German, Joseph Hager (*Picture of Palermo*, 1800, translated by Mrs. Mary Robinson). In contrast to Hager, most of the German travellers of these days, including Salis-Marschlins (*Travels through . . . the Kingdom of Naples*, 1795, translated by Anthony Aufrere), Stolberg (*Travels through . . . Italy and Sicily*, 1796-97, translated by Holcroft), and Kotzebue (*Travels through Italy*, 1806), either took a high view of Italian character or blamed its defects on its oppressors. Stolberg, for instance, found the supposedly wild people of Puglia "friendly, disinterested, hospitable, and with excellent hearts"; while Kotzebue insisted that if the lazzaroni of Naples can be given more work

<sup>1</sup> First published in Philadelphia in 1803.

and rather less superstition, "they will soon become industrious, honest, and opulent." Similar sentiments occur in William Tooke's *Varieties of Literature* (1795) and *Selections from the Most Celebrated Foreign Literary Journals* (1798), and are further echoed in Alexander Thomson's *Letters of a Traveller* (1798) and Francis Collins' *Voyages* (1809). Catherine Wilmot, who wrote up a tour begun by Stephen, second Earl Mount Cashell, in 1801, was shocked by some remnants of *cicisbeism*, but also found Italians who offered an "excellent specimen of rational and domestic life."<sup>2</sup> In *Characteristical Views of the Past and Present State of the People of Spain and Italy* (1808), a collection of public lectures, John Andrews, the noted historian and politician, asserted that "Those who have dispassionately examined the character of the Italians will readily acknowledge that they are a people competent to all that dignifies human nature, and renders a nation great and respectable." Most striking of all, however, was John Chetwode Eustace's view of Italian character in his *Tour through Italy*<sup>3</sup> (not published until 1813), a book worthy to rank in knowledge, sympathy, and literary power with those of Baretti, Moore, and Piozzi. Everywhere in Italy, literally everywhere, he found the old Roman valor and virtues burning with a strong, clear flame. "In truth, these generous passions that long have made Italy so great and illustrious, and turned every province and almost every city into a theatre of deeds of valour and achievements of heroism, . . . all these passions exist still in Italy, burn with vigour even in the bosoms of the populace, and want only an occasion to call them into action, and a leader to combine and direct them to their proper object."

Even old-fashioned travellers like Lemaistre, Semple, and Sansom united with Eustace in denouncing the French depredations in Italy, especially Napoleon's stripping the country of many of its most treasured works of art. To these men and to the Englishmen at home it seemed as if the French conquerors of Italy used the name of republican liberty only as an excuse to plunder, oppress, and rob with a ferocity which could have done worse dam-

<sup>2</sup> See *An Irish Peer on the Continent*, ed. by T. U. Sadleir (1920).

<sup>3</sup> Usually called, from later editions, *A Classical Tour*.



age only had it been directed against a certain well-loved isle. In prose and verse they protested against these so-called republicans who had expelled from Italy her Gothlike Austrian rulers only that they might themselves play the part of Vandals.

I have nothing to say here of the famous French victories of Lodi (1796), Arcole (1796), Rivoli (1797), Mantua (surrendered, 1797), and Marengo (1800), or of the various Cispadane (1796), Ligurian (1797), Cisalpine (1797), Roman (1798), Parthenopæan (1799), and Italian (1802) Republics which these victories enabled the French to erect in Italy. In addition to the usual sources of news, these events were known in England through foreign journals and memoirs, some of which were translated from the German of anonymous writers (1797 and 1798) and from the French of the Baron de Pomps (1796-1800), François René Jean de Pommereul (1799), and Joseph Petit (1801). An indigenous account by William Burke appeared in 1806. From its republican essays in self-government Italy probably derived a powerful stimulus toward freedom which Englishmen were not prepared to appreciate. They brooded chiefly on the facts that the French often treated the new republics like spoils of war, allowed them to be turned into kingdoms for Napoleon and his family, or connived at their annexation to the Empire. Thus the Italians had only exchanged one set of tyrants for another, they said, and these tyrants were inimical to Great Britain. Almost the sole manifestation of British interest in the republican burgeonings in Italy was an anonymous translation, *The Constitution of the Roman Republic* (1798).

English writers' chief concern with the Italian history of the time was to find events to stigmatize the character of the nation whose victories were steadily rendering her more and more of a menace to Great Britain. Pius VI (1775-99) was praised for resisting Napoleon and pitied when he fell on barbarous days. In Vincenzo Monti's poem on the murder (1793) of Nicolas Jean Hugou de Bassville, envoy from the French Republic at Rome—known in England in Henry Boyd's translation as *The Penance of Hugo* (1805)—Englishmen read what was, in effect, gross adulation of Pius's feeble resistance to the French. Monti represented

the various Italian states as calmly submitting to Napoleon, while Pius VI alone repelled "the lawless sons of Loire and Rhone":

He only met the fury in the field,  
And dar'd for Italy alone to wield  
The hallow'd sword. . .

But in 1798 the French, tired of Pius's various breaches of faith, abolished his temporal authority, planted the Tree of Liberty, declared the Roman people free and independent, and compelled the pope to seek exile, first in Siena and later in Valence in France, where he was a virtual captive. Mariana Starke and Richard Duppa, both resident in Rome in these stirring times, wrote full accounts of how the ecclesiastical power, "after continuing above twelve hundred years," was "completely annihilated." Both Starke (*Letters from Italy*, 1800) and Duppa (*Journal . . . upon the Subversion of the Ecclesiastical Government in 1798, 1799*) were quick to realize that Rome had been declared an independent government merely that the French might oppress the people "beyond all example of even the greatest despotism of ancient times. . ." When these tyrants were sure that no more money could be drained from nobles, prelates, or populace, they put an end to "this mockery of consular dignity" by military law. To his *Journal*, from which we have just quoted, Duppa, an art student, appended a list of the treasures stolen from Rome, including eighty-three antique marbles and bronzes from the Vatican and seventeen canvases, headed by Raphael's "Transfiguration." In his poem, *The Crisis; or, The British Muse to the British Minister* (1798), Thomas Maurice waxed effusively indignant at the events of 1796-98:

How wide the sanguine deluge rolls around,  
How deep it stains Italia's fertile bound! . . .  
Latium! I see thy butcher'd sons expire,  
Thy temples blaze in sacrilegious fire;  
I see thy venerable mitred train  
Dragg'd from their shrines, or at their altars slain. . . .  
Nor Goth nor Vandal half such havoc made  
As Gaul's dire chieftains through thy plains have spread.

Henry Tresham, a fellow artist of Duppa in Rome and later a member of the Royal Academy, perpetrated a long poem in the same strain, called *Rome at the Close of the Eighteenth Century!!!* (1799), from which we can hardly take time to quote.

Yet what avail hoar locks, complaints, pleading, tears?  
Have French invaders, bowels, eyes, or ears?

Like Maurice, Tresham used the pitiful pope to excite England against Napoleon:

Crush'd in the ruins of HESPERIA'S fall,  
Truth's meek vice-regent, exil'd, shorn of all,  
Implores for foes who worse than wolves pursue:  
"Father, forgive, they know not what they do."  
—Heav'ns, can we hear unmov'd a good man moan,  
Nor yet assuage, nor make his wrongs our own!

Hardly less rhetorical tears were shed over the pope when he died in practical captivity in his eighty-second year. Both those anonymous pieces, *Death of the Pope!* (1799) and *The Captive of Valence* (1804), were full of his sufferings. In the former Philosophy was represented as fiendishly spreading her "Municipal Cloth over the grave of a Pope," and dancing on the remains laid in "unhallowed ground"—"Posterity already ranks Pius VI among the Martyrs of Modern Philosophy."

Similar tears, I know not how sincere, were shed over the indignities which Bonaparte heaped upon Pius VII (1800-23) when he decided to annex Rome to the Empire in 1809. This pope, who had graced his coronation in 1804, Bonaparte caused to be raped from Rome at night and led captive, first to Savona, later to Fontainebleau. Pius seems, however, if we may believe a "Narrative of the Journey and Imprisonment of Pius VII" (in the *Pamphleteer*, 1814) and *An Authentic Narrative of the Seizure . . . of Pope Pius VII* (published with a *Memoir of the Queen of Etruria*, 1814), to have borne his sufferings with more dignity than his predecessor. The latter account, supposed to have been written by one of the pope's old attendants, could not sufficiently pity "the unconquerable hero, the brave, the pious defender of the Church," nor enough reprobate Napoleon's attempt to smother "the splendour of that celestial light which the Pope everywhere

diffused by his sacred presence." I cannot help feeling that these protests often fell on heedless ears. In spite of their sorrow for Italy, Englishmen's pity for popes was likely to be forced.

Rather more sincere was their grief at the fall of the Venetian Republic (1797), whose moral stock, as we have seen, had been latterly rising in travellers' eyes. The fullest version of this event seems to have been John Hinckley's *Accurate Account of the Fall of the Republic of Venice* (1804), said to have been translated from an Italian manuscript. Arson, rape, and crucifixion were among the milder charges hurled at "a nation which audaciously trampled on every social compact, and which attempted to render its innovations, its errors, and its atrocities common to the whole human race. . ." We are told that under the French the pure domestic life of the Venetians—what a change from Addison or Sharp!—was dissolved, and the youths exposed to gambling and fornication. "The government was without decorum, the priesthood without respect, the temples without divine service, and religion, that corner-stone of states, which forms the hope of the just, the consolation of the unfortunate, the terror of the criminal, without worshippers." It was difficult for Englishmen to forgive Venice for having submitted without a struggle, and when France threw her as a sop to Austria by the treaty of Campo Formio, many of them thought she was getting no more than her desert. Thomas Macgill, for instance (*Travels in . . . Italy and Russia*, 1808), was not entirely heart-broken to have to record that under Austrian rule, "At every corner, on every bridge, might be seen some fair Venetian lady, covered with a veil, and on her knees imploring the aid of charity. . ." Yet did the fate of Venice inspire a sonnet known to every schoolboy, beginning:

Once did she hold the gorgeous East in fee;  
And was the safeguard of the West: the worth  
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,  
Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.

Wordsworth's poem, though written in 1802, was not published till 1807. Its burden ran on the idea that Venice should receive due praise for what she had been in the past, if not for what she promised to be again:

Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade  
Of that which once was great is passed away.

Poems containing, like John Penny's *Gallic Invasion* (1804), protests against Napoleon's ravages in Italy were numerous. In these we hear a great deal of "ravag'd, ruin'd Italy. . ." Napoleon is again and again compared to Attila. But these verses are unspeakably dull. To his translation (1805) of Monti's *Bassvilliana* Henry Boyd added two cantos of his own for the express purpose of taking to task the "dusky demon" from Corsica, but this is the best he could do to describe the havoc loosed on Italy:

Like Pharaoh's plagues, ascending from the dust,  
Heav'n-warring Hate, and Avarice, and Lust,  
So long beguil'd of their expected prize,  
Once more in dread alliance rush abroad,  
Sounding the charge to Cruelty and Fraud,  
And mask'd Hypocrisy, with Heavenward Eyes.

Better than most others are the laboring lines which the painter, Turner, composed for a water color exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1815 as "The Battle of Fort Rock, Val d'Aouste, Piedmont, 1796." In this picture, usually associated with his first Swiss tour (1802), Turner is thought to have had in mind Fort Bard, best known for its failure to stop the Alp-scaling French in 1800.

The snow-capt mountain and huge towers of ice  
Thrust forth their dreary barriers in vain:  
Onward the van progressive forc'd its way,  
Propell'd as the wild Reuss, by native glaciers fed,  
Rolls on impetuous; with ev'ry check gains force  
By the constraint uprais'd; till, to its gathering powers  
All yielding, down the pass the devastation pours  
Her own destructive course. Thus rapine stalk'd  
Triumphant; and plundering hordes, exulting, strew'd,  
Fair Italy, thy plains with woe.

In England the Napoleonic suffering made the pro-Italian spirit daily stronger. Hatred of Italy's oppressor combined with growing liberalism to raise the English estimate of Italian character and give large numbers of the islanders a keen interest in Italy's

political emancipation. What had once been the esoteric passion of a handful became, during the years from 1795 to 1811, an emotion familiar to nearly every liberal-minded Briton. By 1811 not only a few solitary enthusiasts but hundreds of intelligent Englishmen, we may presume, found themselves unwilling that Italy should suffer under foreign oppressors, whether French or of other nationality. Eustace was almost more offended by the Austrians whom he found lording it in Venice and the Venetian territories in 1802 than by the picture-stealing French themselves. Of the Veronese under Austrian control he, anticipating the scorn of the next generation, wrote: "The Austrians they do not and cannot love: they are barbarians and invaders; and though the emperor be a just and even benevolent sovereign, yet his right over them is that of the sword only; and though he may be *tyrannorum mitissimus*, yet in the eyes of every Italian patriot, still he is, as well as Buonaparte, a tyrant and an usurper. . ." In all its essential details Eustace outlined the attitude which the romantic poets were to adopt on the questions of Italian character and independence. Shelley, it will be remembered, made Eustace's *Tour* a close companion of his peregrinations through Italy, lingering, we may imagine, over passages like the following:

If some happy combination of events should deliver her from foreign influence and unite her many states once more under one head, or at least in one common cause, and that the cause of independence and liberty, then Europe might confidently expect to see the spirit and the glory of Rome again revive, and the valour and perseverance which subdued the Gauls and routed the Cimbri and Teutones again displayed in chastizing the insolence of the French, and in checking the incursions of the Germans.

WILLIAM ROSCOE: ITALIAN HISTORY, LITERATURE, AND ART  
FIND A FULL-FLEDGED REDEEMER: 1795-1805

In a sense the various lines of our attack on the origins of the romantic interest in Italy have been converging upon William Roscoe's *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici* (1795) and *Life and Pontificate of Leo the Tenth* (1805). These biographies gathered together into a compact, convenient, and usable form practically

all the knowledge of Italian history, literature, and art that Englishmen had so far mastered; gave that knowledge the most liberal and enthusiastic interpretation; amplified that knowledge in a dozen important respects; and definitely pointed out the lines along which that knowledge could be further enlarged with profit. Roscoe is the first English historian of consequence<sup>4</sup> to focus powers of painstaking observation, clear-cut delineation, and sympathetic interpretation on themes purely Italian. Roscoe's work, as he himself thought of it, was to trace the revival of arts and letters in Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, especially as they were fostered by the family of the Medici, beginning with Cosimo, *Pater Patriæ*, and ending with his great-grandson, Leo X. What he really gave English readers was a political, social, literary, and artistic history of Italy for the century from 1430 to 1530. This period he recreated from the works of Machiavelli, Guicciardini, Paolo Giovio, Muratori, Crescimbeni, Tiraboschi, and other classical authorities, and from his own researches, so colorfully, thoroughly, and enthusiastically as to give it wide popularity in England. For the first time a large number of Englishmen were made to feel really at home in Italy's political, literary, and artistic past. Four editions<sup>5</sup> of his *Lorenzo* and two of his *Leo* were called for in the days before 1815 and several of each afterwards. Once for all Roscoe acclimatized Italy in England. If he did not always determine the exact nature of the romantic interest in that subject, he at least cross-furrowed romantic minds for the planting of the seed. Something of the enthusiasm aroused by his *Lorenzo* can be gathered from the following verses in Thomas James Mathias's *Pursuits of Literature* ("Dialogue the Third," 1796):

But hark, what solemn strains from Arno's vales  
Breathe raptures, wafted on the Tuscan gales!  
LORENZO rears again his awful head,  
And feels his ancient glories 'round him spread;  
The Muses, starting from their trance, revive,  
And at their ROSCOE'S bidding wake and live.

<sup>4</sup> Earlier historians include John Bale, Sir Paul Rycaut, Francis Midon, Alexander Gordon, and Archibald Bower.

<sup>5</sup> The edition of 1799 bears the imprint of "Basil."

In the notes to the *Pursuits* Mathias recommended Roscoe's work in unqualified terms as a "great and important addition to Classical History, which I regard as a phænomenon in Literature, in every point of view." "I recommend it to our country as a work of unquestionable genius, and of uncommon merit. It adds the name of ROSCOE to the very first rank of English Classical Historians."

The reader will remember that this "prodigious" author was the son of a market gardener and tavern-keeper in Liverpool. Born in 1753, he was articled to a Liverpool attorney in 1769, and five years later commenced law practice with a partner in his native city. Soon he was engaged in various commercial and banking enterprises as well, the success of which enabled him to purchase a fine Italian library and devote himself to studies to which he had been early attracted. In collecting books and getting inedited manuscripts transcribed he was greatly aided by William Clarke, a friend and fellow man of business, who was accustomed to spend his winters in Florence. Actual writing on his *Life of Lorenzo* was begun in 1790, the work being published at Liverpool under the date of 1795<sup>6</sup> in two beautiful quarto volumes, illustrated with portraits and medals. On its immediate success Roscoe retired from the law and, keeping his finger in several commercial pies, devoted the next ten years of his life to writing *The Life and Pontificate of Leo the Tenth*, which appeared in Liverpool in 1805 in four quarto volumes, even more elaborately illustrated than the *Lorenzo*. In 1806 Roscoe was elected Member of Parliament for Liverpool, but sat for less than a year. Of interest to us is the fact that in 1816 a run on a bank in which he was a partner obliged him to sell his fine library, especially distinguished for its rare editions of Italian books. At the sale rather less than two thousand items brought over £5,000. Out of affection and admiration for the famous popularizer of Italian things, his friends bought up a portion of his library and presented it to the Liverpool Athenæum, where it now forms the Roscoe Collection. The interesting fact that the rather dingy city of Liverpool should have proved the center from which familiarity with Italian light

<sup>6</sup> It was not actually put on sale till February, 1796.



and color spread all over Great Britain is commented on by Mathias in those same notes from which I quoted above:

*It is pleasant to consider a gentleman, not under the auspices of an university, or beneath the shelter of academic bowers, but in the practice of the law and business of great extent, and resident in the remote commercial town of Liverpool (where nothing is heard of but Guinea ships, slaves, blacks, and merchandise), investigating and describing the rise and progress of every polite art in Italy at the revival of learning with acuteness, depth, and precision; with the spirit of the poet, and the solidity of the historian.*

Though published ten years apart, we may, for purposes of briefly summarizing Roscoe's importance in our story, consider his famous biographies together. As I said before, he did not so much introduce to his compatriots new figures from Italian history, art, and literature as give certain old figures thorough and sympathetic treatment. His affection for the principles of the French Revolution, already observed in his (?) Petrarchan *Ode to the People of France*, led him to treat the Medici from Cosimo, *Pater Patriæ*, to the murderous Lorenzino as heroes of the republican spirit, and to introduce to English readers, apparently for the first time, democratic martyrs like Filippo Strozzi; while his love of Italian independence caused him to erect slandered popes like Alexander VI, Julius II, and Leo X into important patriots. Domestic tragedies were not exactly to Roscoe's taste, but he liked nothing better than to trace the steps by which some overambitious tyrant staggered to his "fall." In matters of art and literature, Roscoe's account of how they rose under Cosimo and Lorenzo to reach their maturity under Leo X furnished English readers with more complete, connected, detailed, and sympathetic histories of these subjects than were anywhere available in English.

In the next few pages I shall try to suggest more specifically, but by no means completely, what English readers found in Roscoe's books. In the first place, there were frequent panegyrics on the Medici. Not for a minute would Roscoe admit that Cosimo, *Pater Patriæ*, had ever, as Lyttelton had implied in his *Dialogues of the Dead*, held designs upon the liberty of his country. He liked to record how the affection of his fellow citizens had saved Cosimo

from the wrath of Rinaldo degli Albizzi, restored him from banishment to the first place in the republic, and honored him with his famous title. By means of "kindness to the superior ranks of his fellow-citizens, and by a constant attention to the interests and wants of the lower class, whom he relieved with unbounded generosity," Cosimo acquired zealous partisans, whom he considered rather "as pledges for the continuance of the power he possessed than as instruments to be employed in extending it to the ruin and subjugation of the state." His admiration for Cosimo's grandson, Lorenzo the Magnificent, Roscoe carried to the point of refusing to believe that this man's particular combination of democratic virtues and talents could have been marred even by those venial amours hinted at in Machiavelli. Both as a statesman and a patriot, Lorenzo, in Roscoe's eyes, appeared "to peculiar advantage." He warred "for security, not for territory; and the riches produced by the fertility of the soil, and the industry and ingenuity of the inhabitants of the Florentine republic, instead of being dissipated in imposing projects and ruinous expeditions, circulated in their natural channels, giving happiness to the individual, and respectability to the state."<sup>7</sup> By God's grace he was saved from the vicious conspiracies of the Pazzi and Frescobaldi, here dramatically described, to govern a free people by their common consent. "It will be difficult, not to say impossible, to discover, either in his conduct or his precepts, anything that ought to stigmatize him as an enemy to the freedom of his country."

This conception of Lorenzo as a patriot, worried by conspiracy but winning through to a position in European politics worthy of a great Whig prime minister, Roscoe, by expanding the ideal of patriotism, adapted to Leo X. He was well aware that "Among all the individuals of ancient or modern times who, by the circumstances of their lives, by their virtues, or by their talents, have attracted the attention of mankind, there is, perhaps, no one whose character has stood in so doubtful a light as that of Leo X."<sup>8</sup> But he absolutely refused to credit the old charges of gluttony

<sup>7</sup> *The Life of Lorenzo de' Medici*, Chapter X.

<sup>8</sup> *The Life and Pontificate of Leo the Tenth*, Chapter XXIV, from which the other quotations in this paragraph are also taken.

and adultery against a man whose life offered, in fact, "an example of chastity and decorum, the more remarkable as it was the more unusual in the age in which he lived." Roscoe was shocked that the famous Italian historians, Guicciardini and Muratori, should have found Leo's political actions stained with fraud, cruelty, ingratitude, and boundless family ambition; distressed that "indifference to the independence and common cause of Italy" should have led them to misunderstand and underestimate the political capacity of Leo. Grant that he roughly suppressed the petty tyrants within the ecclesiastical domain, usurped the Duchy of Urbino, tried to lay hold of the Milanese, and bridled Tuscany with a stern hand—what did all this stretching out after political power mean? It meant, simply, that Leo's mind was filled with a splendid project. He sought to unite the resources of the Milanese, Tuscany, and the Papal States for the sole purpose of driving the Spanish out of the Kingdom of Naples, then almost neglected by its young sovereign, the lately elected Emperor Charles V. Such an attempt, said Roscoe, would have had "the fairest probability of success." From this glorious conquest the still young pope would have turned his conquering arms against the French and Imperialists who overran northern Italy at will. Thus he might have been able to rid the peninsula once for all of the modern Huns and Goths who preyed upon it. "The first and most earnest desire of the pontiff was to free the whole extent of Italy from its foreign invaders; an object not only excusable, but in the highest degree commendable." Here, according to Roscoe, was the key to all Leo's apparently weak, cruel, contradictory, and unintelligible political movements. Death, unfortunately, carried him off just when his plans were beginning to mature and demonstrate to sceptical after times the "spaciousness" of his patriotic mind.

Roscoe's preoccupation with Italian independence suggested a similar justification of much of the apparently shocking conduct of Julius II and even of that pope to whom "almost every crime that can disgrace humanity is attributed. . .".<sup>9</sup> Besides praising the "com-

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter VI, from which all the references to Alexander VI are taken. The reference to Julius II is from Chapter IX.

prehensive," if martial, mind of Julius II for its design of expelling "all foreign powers, or, as they were then called, barbarians, from Italy," Roscoe contended that it is "unjust to brand the character of Alexander VI with any peculiar and extraordinary share of infamy" for his ambition to "establish a permanent dominion in Italy" under Cesare Borgia. With Leo X and Julius II, Alexander almost undoubtedly shared a desire to expel Italy's invaders and unite the country under a strong central government. "Even by his severest adversaries, he is allowed to have been a man of an elevated genius, of a wonderful memory, eloquent, vigilant, and dexterous in the management of all his concerns." Appended to the first volume of his life of Leo was a "Dissertation on the Character of Lucretia Borgia," in which Roscoe, "seeking to invalidate an imputation which disgraces human nature itself," showed the improbability of Alexander's reputed incest with his daughter. The monstrous charges against the Borgias must often be ascribed, he said, to political calumny. The red-haired Lucrezia herself he hailed as a lover of her native land and literature, declaring that no one in the Renaissance was "better entitled to share with Leo X in the honours due to the restorers of learning than the accomplished but calumniated daughter of Alexander VI." Thus, though he could not entirely whitewash his beloved Italians, Roscoe was usually able to soften their moral obliquity by calling attention to their love of art and country. This treatment of persons long despised in England did much to recommend them to the imagination of liberty-loving writers.

The last of the many Medici heroes was, according to Roscoe, that Lorenzino who murdered his mulatto cousin, Alessandro, the first Duke of Florence. Though Robertson had not been able to make up his mind about the true motives of this extraordinary man, Roscoe found great plausibility in Lorenzino's written apology, where, "after vindicating himself from the imputation of having been induced by any other motive than an earnest desire to liberate his country from a state of intolerable servitude, he concludes with lamenting that the want of energy and virtue in his fellow-citizens prevented them from availing themselves of the opportunity which he had afforded them of re-establishing

the ancient government."<sup>10</sup> Such an explanation he found all the more plausible in view of Lorenzino's learning, intelligence, fine literary style, and early addiction to the society of the liberty-loving Filippo Strozzi. He even called him "the second Brutus, who burst the bonds of consanguinity in the expectation of being the deliverer of his country. But the principle of political virtue was now extinct. . ." The only hearts in which it lingered met, under the leadership of Strozzi himself, a crushing defeat at the battle of Montemurlo (1537). Roscoe closed his life of Lorenzo with the sad story of how Filippo Strozzi, "the magnanimous assertor of the liberties of his country," languished upwards of twelve months in the prisons of Castello, where, after suffering cruel tortures, "he called to mind the example of Cato of Utica, and fell by his own hand, a devoted victim of the cause of freedom." Roscoe says he could find little information relative to the history of Florence after the fall of the Republic, most of her historians having been unwilling to perpetuate the record of her subjugation—"and the desire of information fortunately terminates at that period when the materials for supplying it are not to be found."

As for power-intoxicated princes, we may note that Roscoe gave the best account of the crimes and "fall" of Lodovico Sforza that had yet appeared in English. Of even darker dye than the murder of his nephew, Giovanni Galeazzo Maria, Roscoe reckoned Sforza's sin in inviting Charles VIII of France to usurp the Kingdom of Naples and overrun Italy, thus embroiling that unhappy country in dynastic wars of which it was, perhaps, never to be able to rid itself. From several contemporary poets he cited and translated poems on this national calamity, more especially a Latin ode in which Crinito pointed out that Mars, his worship having been long neglected, was incensed against the Italians:

'Tis he directs th' o'erwhelming flood,  
And scorns Italia's dastard brood.  
Trembling, I mark the dread decree:  
—Ah, hapless Naples, woe to thee!

<sup>10</sup> *The Life of Lorenzo de' Medici*, Chapter X, from which all the references to Lorenzino and Filippo Strozzi are taken.

He was glad to record how Louis XII became the instrument through which God punished so many outrages against man and country by causing Sforza to spend the last ten years of his life in "a dark and lonely chamber" in France. Moral rectitude might have spared another man many of the horrors incident to such imprisonment, but Lodovico's sense of guilt probably made "the sufferings of his mind . . . yet more acute than those of his body." "Scarcely does the history of mankind exhibit a spectacle of equal commiseration. . . . The human ruin was complete. Other calamities may be tolerated, 'but a wounded spirit, who can bear?'"<sup>11</sup> Toward the dark spirit of Cesare Borgia, Roscoe was rather kinder. From the murder of his brother, the Duke of Gandia, and from incest with Lucrezia he entirely exonerated him. Of all "cruelty, rapine, injustice, and lust" he could not, of course, free his character, but he found a certain baleful glamour in a man who, "whether he thundered in open hostility at the gates of a city, or endeavoured to effect his purpose by negotiation and treachery, . . . was equally irresistible."<sup>12</sup> Though he could not attribute Cesare's fall to the traditional poisoned wine intended for others, Roscoe steeped his story in drama.

Almost the only domestic tragedy treated by our historian was that in which Cardinal Ippolito d'Este "with a diabolical pleasure" caused the eyes of his half-brother, Giulio, because they had attracted "a lady of Ferrara," to be put out. Roscoe made rather more than Gibbon of the ensuing conspiracy against Duke Alfonso I, precipitated by his suffering Ippolito's "atrocious deed to remain unpunished. . . ."<sup>13</sup> Joined by another dissatisfied brother, Ferrante, Giulio made an unsuccessful attempt on Alfonso's life. "At the moment when the axe was suspended" over the conspirators, the duke commuted their sentence to life imprisonment.

So much for the political characters celebrated by Roscoe. As for the literary ones, he mentioned nearly all the important names from Dante to Ariosto. In connection with his appraisal of the literary achievement and merit of his hero, Lorenzo, Roscoe traced the origins of Italian literature, the rise of sonneteering, and the early history of satire, tragedy, and comedy. In the process he re-

<sup>11</sup> *The Life and Pontificate of Leo the Tenth*, Chapter VI.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter VII.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter VII.

furbished the names of Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Luigi Pulci, and others of whom Englishmen had been hearing lately, while he begged their favor for such comparatively unknown poets as Burchiello, Luca Pulci, Matteo Franco, Angelo Poliziano, and Lorenzo himself. With regard to Poliziano and Lorenzo, Roscoe made the point that these men had, so to speak, revived the *trecentisti's* revival of Italian poetry and prose. We must remember, he said, that after the death of Petrarch and Boccaccio Italian literature suffered a hundred years of degradation, from which it might never have been rescued without the efforts of this pair. Poliziano's *Orfeo* he called the first tragic opera of Europe; while he insisted that his *Stanze per la giostra di Giuliano de' Medici* was "one of the earliest productions in the revival of letters that breathed the true spirit of poetry; and . . . essentially contributed towards the establishment of a better taste in Italy." From this work Roscoe translated four stanzas, keeping the *ottava rima* of the original. One of these we may pause to quote as the first example of this favorite romantic stanza to appear in English, so far as I know, since Huggins' *Orlando Furioso* (1755):

For Julian many a maiden heav'd a sigh,  
And many a glance the tender flame confess'd;  
But not the radiance of the brightest eye  
Could melt the icy rigour of his breast.  
Wild through the trackless woods the youth would hie,  
Severe of aspect, and disdaining rest,  
Whilst the dark pine or spreading beech supplied  
A wreath, from summer suns his head to hide.

What Roscoe meant by "the true spirit of poetry" he made amply clear in his discussion of Lorenzo's verses, many of which he edited, as we know, for the first time. Very decidedly in the tradition of Baretti, Warton, and Hurd, he defined the true poetic qualities as vivid description, personification, allegory, and all those various forms of simile and metaphor "which are so conspicuous in the works of Ariosto, Spenser, Milton, and subsequent writers of the higher class who are either natives of Italy, or have formed their taste upon the poets of that nation." In illustration of Lorenzo's poetical merits, Roscoe quoted many an

octave, some of which, like the following description of Jealousy, he translated in the same stanza form:

Sad, in a nook obscure and sighing deep,  
A pale and haggard beldam shrinks from view;  
Her gloomy vigils there she loves to keep,  
Wrapt in a robe of ever-changing hue;  
A hundred eyes she has that ceaseless weep,  
A hundred ears that pay attention due.  
Imagined evils aggravate her grief,  
Heedless of sleep, and stubborn to relief.

For his sonnets, his *Rappresentazione di San Giovanni e Paolo*, his *Beoni*, his *Nencia da Barberino*, and his various sacred and profane songs Roscoe hailed Lorenzo as "The restorer of the lyric poetry of Italy, the promoter of the dramatic, the founder of the satiric, rustic, and other modes of composition. . ." He was not merely a poetical genius, he was an original genius—"it is in the highest degree probable that, in point of poetical excellence, Italy has not boasted a more illustrious name than that of Lorenzo de' Medici."

In the life of Leo, Roscoe proceeded to trace the steps by which the Italian lyric, dramatic, epic, and satiric poetry, either invented or revived by Lorenzo and his contemporaries, reached a climax in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. A description of this triumph of the revival of learning seems to have been projected by the poet, William Collins, about 1750, Dr. Johnson having "heard him speak with great kindness of Leo the Tenth and with keen resentment of his tasteless successor."<sup>14</sup> But probably not a page of his history was ever written."<sup>15</sup> A similar project by Joseph Warton and his friends,<sup>16</sup> who might have included Walpole, Mason, and Gray, also came to grief, apparently because the time was not yet ripe. Roscoe felt that it had probably been "want of public encouragement" which blighted this noble undertaking. Gibbon is also said to have contemplated and abandoned,

<sup>14</sup> Adrian VI, the Flemish pope. <sup>15</sup> *Lives of the English Poets*.

<sup>16</sup> Warton, then an old man, described this project to Roscoe in 1797. It seems to have originated soon after Collins' death (1759). See the preface to *The Life and Pontificate of Leo the Tenth*.



perhaps for a similar reason, a literary as well as political history of the Medici. In assigning a cause for these miscarriages, it should be remembered that no writer of the midcentury could have written such a work without arduously exploring many literary highways, not to mention bypaths, of whose very existence most Englishmen of that day were profoundly ignorant. Roscoe, on the other hand, had the advantage of all that growth of interest in Italian literature which we have been tracing in this study.

In his account of Italian poetry under Leo, Roscoe stressed the epic greatness of Ariosto, unrivalled by Trissino with his regular but unexciting *Italia liberata*. It seemed to our historian that without the splendor of Ariosto's genius "a considerable diminution must have been made from the glory of the age." He pointed out that, as contrasted with the "delicate and attenuated sentiment" of the sonneteers, "the bold and vigorous ideas of Ariosto bear without injury all change of climate; and his works have contributed more than those of any other author to diffuse a true poetical spirit throughout Europe."<sup>17</sup> Among the sonneteers, of whom Roscoe was obviously not too fond—though he admitted, referring to Petrarch, "that it is scarcely possible for a lover to find himself so situated as not to meet with his own peculiar feelings reflected in some passage or other of that engaging author"<sup>18</sup>—he gave especial notice to Giusto de' Conti, Bembo, Della Casa, and the women poets, Vittoria Colonna, Veronica Gambara, Gaspara Stampa, and Tullia d'Aragona. He was of the opinion that "Among the Italian writers who have revived in their works the stile of Petrarca, Vittoria Colonna is entitled to the first rank," her sonnets possessing "more vigour of thought, vivacity of colouring, and natural pathos than are generally to be found among the disciples of that school."<sup>19</sup> The credit of perfecting "the jocose Italian satire, which originated in Florence towards the close of the preceding century," Roscoe con-

<sup>17</sup> *The Life and Pontificate of Leo the Tenth*, Chapter XVI.

<sup>18</sup> *The Life of Lorenzo de' Medici*, Chapter V.

<sup>19</sup> *The Life and Pontificate of Leo the Tenth*, Chapter XVI, from which are taken likewise the remaining quotations in this paragraph.

ferred on the "eccentric genius" of Francesco Berni, who rendered "this whimsical stile of composition . . . in the highest degree lively and entertaining. . ." It is difficult, he said, to convey to an English reader an adequate idea of *la poesia bernesca* because "its excellence consists rather in the simplicity of the diction, and the sweetness of the Tuscan idiom, than in that sterling wit and vigorous sentiment which bear to be transfused into another language." This observation he applied to the satirical works of Francesco Mauro, Giovanni Francesco Bini, Giovanni della Casa, Agnolo Firenzuola, Francesco Maria Molza, and Pietro Nelli. The extravagant macaronics of Teofilo Folengo he also praised, while the *Orlandino*, in which this author abandoned "the grotesque and motley style of his former productions," he recommended as filled with "the vigour of his imagination, and the facility and graces of his composition." Other writers discussed or mentioned by Roscoe in the life of Leo, some of them not contemporary with the pope, were the *novellieri*, Boccaccio, Sacchetti, Masuccio Salernitano, Arienti, and Bandello; the *improvvisatore*, Accolti; and the tragedians, Trissino and Rucellai. The comedies of Ariosto and Bibbiena seemed to him mere "scholastic attempts to imitate the ancient writers. . ." He also had something to say of certain pastoral and didactic pieces: Sannazzaro's *Arcadia*, Rucellai's *Api*, Alamanni's *Coltivazione*, and Molza's *Ninfa tiberina*. Is it any wonder that English readers, from this time on, began to feel really at home in the realm of Italian literature?

Similarly with Italian painting, sculpture, and architecture. Readers of Roscoe felt they had been let into the most abstruse secrets of the past. Though he usually clung to the academic interpretation of art, Roscoe did his best to suffuse the conventional beau idéal with transcendental meaning, followed Reynolds in finding Michelangelo God-intoxicated, and went so far as to discover a certain amount of divine afflatus in some of his predecessors. His chief contribution to the subject, however, was to put into English hands a competent summary of the rise of Italian painting, sculpture, and architecture. By acquainting Englishmen with the chief facts about the lives and works of Guido da Siena, Cimabue, Giotto, Paolo Uccello, Pollaiuolo, the Lippis, and Sig-

norelli in painting; the Pisani, Ghiberti, and Donatello in sculpture; and Michelozzi and Brunelleschi in architecture, he helped to break down the prejudice of his time against "Gothick" art. His account of these "old masters" was tinged with that enthusiasm which almost always attends an attempt to understand art in relation to the conditions that produced it.

Just how Raphael, Michelangelo, Da Vinci, and Titian learned to "raise their views" from the hesitating realism of these "old masters" to "the true end of the profession" was one of Roscoe's favorite topics. For it was by the instrumentality of his Medici heroes, Lorenzo and Leo X, that artists learned to turn from "the daily prototypes of common life" to that idealism of form and feature which distinguishes "a correct and genuine taste for the arts." By gathering together impressive collections of Greek and Roman marbles and establishing schools for the study of the antique, the Medici made possible the tasteful sculpture of Giovanni Francesco Rustici and Andrea Sansovino, and the wonderful pictures of Raphael and his pupils, not to mention the tremendous triumphs of the divine Michelangelo in all branches of the arts. In the biography of Leo, Roscoe described the lives and works of these supermanlike products of that evolution which he seems to have been the first to trace at some length in English. Already in the *Lorenzo*,<sup>20</sup> however, he had made a defense of Michelangelo which, united to Sir Joshua's, seems at last to have established the artist in the English imagination as the *génie sans peur*, if not completely *sans reproche*. In Lorenzo's garden academy for the study of the antique "the light" had already risen, and Michelangelo's ardent mind, "conversant with the finest forms of antiquity," had projected a world of beings whom his critics, either "from ignorance, or from envy," have censured for "exceeding in their forms and attitudes the limits and the possibilities of nature. . ." These silly critics merely illustrate their own ignorance of the nature of true art, and of the necessity of such a revolution in the aims of painting as nothing "short of that ideal excellence which he only knew to embody" could have effected. What was Raphael himself before he "caught from the

<sup>20</sup> Chapter IX.

new Prometheus a portion of the ethereal fire—?" As for those low cavillers who object to the introduction of nudes into the *Last Judgment*, let them try to understand, for once, that it would be impossible for a true artist to mingle with a subject "which unites every thing terrible and sublime, and absorbs all other passions," a feeling that "acknowledges a pruriency of imagination to which true taste as well as true modesty is a stranger." Before leaving Michelangelo, Roscoe urged Englishmen to remember that Italians revere him not only for his art but for his poetry, a side of his achievement usually neglected, so that, to use Mathias's words, he arose at last—

Michael, in full Pierian pow'rs erect,  
The sculptor, painter, poet, architect,  
Michael to Britain dear. . .

In the biographies of Roscoe Italian political, literary, and artistic history found their first important English historian. He summed up existing knowledge of Italian things, clarified it in a way to awaken affection for it, and amplified it in a manner which caught the imagination of his time. It would be no exaggeration, I think, to attribute directly to Roscoe a great deal of the triumph of English interest in Italy which took place between 1795 and 1811. The most important things his books did were, of course, to make Englishmen want to learn still more about Italy, and to lay down the lines along which such knowledge could be most effectively brought before the public.

MARK NOBLE, SIR RICHARD CLAYTON, WILLIAM ROUGH, AND  
OTHERS: ITALIAN POLITICAL HISTORY ACCLIMATIZED  
UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF ROSCOE: 1796-1806

In so far as Roscoe's works, on the political side, tended to stress the history of the Medici, the doings of that family were rather unduly represented in the Italian history read, written, and translated by Englishmen in the days before 1811. The single year, 1797, for instance, witnessed the publication of Mark Noble's *Memoirs of the Illustrious House of Medici*, Nicolas Tenhove's *Memoirs of the House of Medici*, translated from the French by Sir Richard Clayton, and Johann Philipp Siebenkees's *Life of*

*Bianca Capello*, done from the German by Conrad Ludger. Still other accounts of the Medici, usually of the blots on their 'scutcheon, occurred in William Tooke's *Varieties of Literature* (1795), in the *Saggi di prose e poesie* edited by Leonardo Nardini and Serafino Buonaiuti (Vol. I, 1796, and Vol. III, 1797), in Tooke's *Selections from the Most Celebrated Foreign Literary Journals* (1798), in Lodovico Guicciardini's *Sacco di Roma* ("Londra," 1802), and in J. G. Lemaistre's *Travels* (1806). The incidents of which these works are particularly full are those first brought to eighteenth-century attention in Cork's *Letters from Italy*: Lorenzino's murder of his tyrannous cousin, Alessandro, the mulatto; the awful justice which Cosimo, the first grand duke, visited upon his fratricidal son, Garzia; this same wicked ruler's incest with his daughter, Isabella, later strangled for adultery by her husband, Paolo Giordano Orsini; and the dark-starred loves of Francesco, the second grand duke, and Bianca Capello, supposed by Cork to have been poisoned by Cardinal Ferdinando. Tenhove's *Memoirs* (originally printed, 1773-75) stressed, like Roscoe's work, the rise of art and literature in the Renaissance, and, published at Bath in two beautiful quarto volumes, furnished an elaborate supplement to his *Life of Lorenzo*. Mark Noble, who was Rector of Barming in Kent and Chaplain to the Earl of Leicester, differed from Roscoe and Tenhove in confining his *Memoirs* to the political and domestic history of the Medici. He claims that he never read Roscoe till after completing his own book, though he does not deny that the popularity of the *Lorenzo* spurred him to his task. From these lengthy works and from the shorter pieces referred to above we may reconstruct the English adventures of what seem, if we may judge from the imaginative use made of them in these and later, not to mention Jacobean, times, to be the two most fascinating figures in Medici history: Lorenzino and Bianca Capello. We should not forget, of course, that these works usually extolled Cosimo, *Pater Patriæ*, as a patriotic hero of the first water, representing his final triumph over Rinaldo degli Albizzi as a great victory of the democratic spirit; nor did they often fail to drop a tear on the tragic sufferings of the last of the Florentine liberty-lovers, Filippo Strozzi, already popularized by Roscoe.

In William Tooke's *Varieties of Literature* (1795) appeared under the title, "Bianca," an account of the Capello which contradicted Cork's chivalrous interpretation of her life and death. According to this version,<sup>21</sup> Bianca had been forced to flee to Florence with her paramour-clerk, Buonsignori, when, returning one cold morning from illicit intercourse, she found the back-door of her father's Venetian palace closed. This version called to English attention, perhaps for the first time, the incident of the baker's boy who, by kindly closing an open door as he passed on his early rounds, precipitated a flight involving the destinies of a great family, if not of a nation. It made Francesco, as usual, privy to Buonsignori's murder; and added the interesting information that Bianca had once tried to deceive the grand duke into thinking she was about to present him with a son. When the cardinal brother spoiled this trick, she attempted to poison him by means of a tart with the ironical results we know of. This account was substantiated in most details except the last by the publication in *Saggi di prose e poesie* (1796) of a lengthy extract from Galluzzi's *Istoria del granducato di Toscana*. According to Galluzzi, there had been no foul play at all, Bianca and the duke dying from perfectly natural causes. In 1797 Tenhove, in Clayton's English dress, advanced the opinion that Bianca had been foully seduced from her home, abandoned by her husband in Florence, and rescued from the gutter by Francesco. He repeated the discreditable version of the tart story, but said nothing of Bianca's trying to palm off a false birth on the duke. For his part, Noble, who seems to have written with Cork in mind, returned to the version which made Francesco a would-be betrayer and Ferdinando a successful poisoner. Summing up, he wrote, "Time, the betrayer of falsehood, and discoverer of truth, has restored Bianca to that reputation that she had been deprived of for two centuries. Her beauteous form is again disclosed in all its purity. England boasts two likenesses of her; they are both at Strawberry Hill, the seat of the Earl of Orford. . ."

But again this lovely legend was punctured, this time by the translation of a commanding piece of German scholarship. Conrad

<sup>21</sup> Probably taken from Joseph Jérôme Le Français de Lalande's *Voyage d'un françois en Italie* (1769).

Ludger could not bear Noble's having made Cardinal Ferdinando poison the fated pair with a "*blanc manger*," a "name utterly unknown in an Italian bill of fare." A great admirer of Roscoe, Ludger felt that out of respect to that lofty author nothing but the truth should ever be told about any member of the Medici family. By translating Siebenkees, Ludger hoped to put down both Cork and Noble, and contribute a modest pendant to Roscoe's work. Historical accuracy, if such we find in Siebenkees, brought to light facts both good and bad. It affirmed that Francesco had won Bianca only by means of a cunning bawd, but added that she really had tried to fool him with a false pregnancy. It declared that she had treated those who served her in this affair with abominable ingratitude and persecution, but added that she and the cardinal had always lived on friendly terms! In fact, Bianca had often wheedled money out of Francesco for the cardinal, and the fatal meeting at Poggio a Caiano had been arranged for the express purpose of celebrating the fact that she had been able to patch up a quarrel between Ferdinando and her husband. Siebenkees, on the ground of the well-known characters of all parties concerned, agreed with Galluzzi in absolutely denying that there had been any poisoning on either side, attributing the deaths to disease. Thus did scholarship take—for the time being—the wind out of any young poets or novelists who may have been contemplating works on the subject. An article called a "Historical Account of the State of Commerce, Art, and Sciences in Tuscany" in William Tooke's *Selections from the Most Celebrated Foreign Literary Journals* (1798) followed Siebenkees in taking no stock in the poisoning; while a long footnote to J. G. Lemaistre's *Travels after the Peace of Amiens* (1806), following Lalande, repeated the old tale to Bianca's discredit. The only imaginative version of the tragedy to appear in English was a partial translation of August Gottlieb Meissner's florid novel, *Bianka Cappello*, made by Benjamin Thompson for *The German Miscellany* (1796). It was to explode the popularity of this melodramatic piece that Siebenkees had made his study of Bianca. In Meissner she is an angel, and Ferdinando, in so far as he is able to overthrow her, plays the part of an archfiend. This chivalrous atti-

tude toward Bianca seems to have originally gained currency in Germany from Giulio Roberto di Sanseverino's sentimental biography of the duchess.

Even more interesting to Englishmen than the mystery of the poisoned tart were the motives which led Lorenzino to murder Duke Alessandro. In his old tragedy, *The Traytor*, Shirley had interpreted Lorenzino's "tale . . . of a Commonwealth and Liberty" as a blind:

It was to gain a faction  
With discontented persons, a fine trick  
To make a buzz of reformation.  
My ends are compass'd; hang the ribble rabble.

Robertson, as we have seen, was at a loss whether to attribute the murder to iniquity, hatred, or heroism, in which indecision he was followed by Tenhove, who characterized the comedy-writing pandar as "one of the most singular characters in history." For his part, Noble followed Roscoe in taking the lowest possible view of the libidinous duke, and the highest possible of Lorenzino. His account of the murder—in which he stressed the fact that this self-styled "Third Brutus" had imbibed sentiments of antique liberty from Filippo Strozzi—Noble concluded with the question: "Can there be, in the history of any nation or family, produced such striking revolutions, and uncommon occurrences . . . ?" Still another account of the story came into England in 1797 when Nardini and Buonaiuti selected from Bernardo Segni's *Storie fiorentine dall'anno 1527 al 1555* an account of Duke Alessandro's death for inclusion in their *Saggi di prose e poesie* (Vol. III). This version softened the character of the duke considerably. It also suggested that the woman whom Lorenzino promised to obtain for Alessandro on that fatal night was not, as Roscoe had said, the former's aunt, but his natural sister, Landomine, on whom the duke was anxious to beget "un figliuolo certo." If all this stir over Lorenzino had not produced some imaginative response, we should be entitled, I think, to disappointment. It gave rise, however, to a tragedy, William Rough's *Lorenzino di Medici* (1797).

Rough dedicated his drama to William Roscoe "for the hours of useful pleasure which your Biographical Efforts have afforded



me. . . " He came upon "the foundation of the Fable," he says, not only in Roscoe but in Robertson. It would appear, also, that he had either read or heard of Segni's account of Landomine. With the historical facts, as furnished by these authorities, Rough did not hesitate to take rather more than the usual liberties accorded poets. If "not . . . unreasonable," his use of poetic license was certainly unexpected, I should think, by readers familiar with the various histories referred to above. For in Rough, Alessandro is changed from a negroid whoremonger to a yellow-haired, justice-loving, friend-trusting prince, who cannot be made to forsake his childhood sweetheart, Laurentilla (Lorenzino's legitimate sister!), even by the threats of Charles V. Charles wants him to marry his bastard daughter, Margaret of Austria, here changed from Alessandro's real-life spouse into a stage fortune-hunter, whose offended vanity—Alessandro absolutely refuses to marry her—can be satisfied with nothing short of his life, to taking which she whips up Lorenzino. Rough gives us to understand that his hero-villain is animated to the deed chiefly by a desire to be a second Lorenzo the Magnificent—prop of art and first citizen of a free state. To this ambition are added two specific spurs: first, his fear of being supplanted in the duke's favor; second, his love of the beautiful, if fiendishly vindictive, Margaret of Austria. This vixen plays on all sides of his complicated nature when she appeals to him, in the third person, to revenge her on Alessandro:

Is he ambitious? She who stands before him,  
 The daughter of the Kingdom-shaking Charles,  
 Can much exalt him in the road to greatness.  
 Is he desirous of an endless name,  
 And to be rumour'd in the mouths of men;  
 Will bravely vindicate his country's rights,  
 And free his native city from the yoke  
 Of an usurping and tyrannic sway?  
 Margaret's great father can enforce th' attempt,  
 And bid the free state still continue free.

Again, remembering his fondness for diplomacy, literary composition, and pictures, of which he has collected a great gallery "To show the world what Italy produc'd," she tempts him with the bait—

You shall surpass in wide-extended fame  
 Lorenzo the Magnificent himself,  
 Patron of arts and arbiter of states!

At first Lorenzino thinks to challenge Alessandro to decide the political destiny of Florence by a duel, but the cunning Margaret, with hypocritical talk of "Roman Brutus," persuades him to use a dagger in the dark. When this she-devil finds Lorenzino half-crazed after the murder of his friend, she asks:

Is this the man,  
 The wondrous man, whose comprehensive soul  
 Seem'd to demand the tribute of applause  
 From each admiring ear, each raptur'd tongue?  
 Rouse, Lorenzino, rouse, lest you become  
 A mere book-hero. . .

But Lorenzino, unable to blind himself to his more immediate motives, cannot follow her advice to tell the citizens that,

patriot-like, for them alone  
 You have condemn'd the feeble claims of friendship,  
 And have struck deep for freedom and your country.

Too late he learns that he has destroyed his brother-in-law as well as friend—for Alessandro has been secretly married to Laurentina! It is needless to add that the poetical liberties which Rough took with history, by rendering Lorenzino's motives to the murder more complex than ever, merely weakened the effectiveness of his drama.

This is the place, I think, to mention a play on Italian history which, though not written originally in English, was largely inspired by Robertson and proved very popular in translation. I refer to Schiller's *Verschwörung des Fiesco zu Genua* (1783), translated into English by Noehden and Stoddart as *Fiesco*; or, *The Genoese Conspiracy* (1796). This thrilling story seems formerly to have discouraged dramatists because of its purely accidental catastrophe. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, however, the popularity of republican ideals, combined with the beginnings of what we may call a "fashion" for ransacking Italian history for democratic themes, led Schiller to try to make Fiesco's doom depend

on his character. His way of doing this was to effect a radical change in the fellow conspirator, Verrina, as depicted in Robertson. From an ambitious hater of the nobility Schiller made Verrina into a grave, austere, and inflexible republican. He happens to hate young Giannettino Doria because the latter has raped his daughter, but always he has in mind a great democratic design. To arouse in the rebellious Fiesco an old Roman love of liberty he brings all his ingenuity as well as sincerity to bear. When it becomes clear, however, that Fiesco will not only overthrow the tyrannical Doria but "become a tyrant still more dangerous," Verrina resolves, calling on the shade of Scipio, to kill him. As well as by ambition for power, Fiesco is animated to revolt by the facts that young Doria sets a bravo upon him and that Doria's sister, Julia, from pride and jealousy, tries to poison Leonora, his beloved wife. After heading a successful revolution over the dead body of Leonora—he himself, mistaking her, in the disguise she adopts in order to be near him, for the hated Giannettino, murders her!—Fiesco, fully determined to have himself declared duke, is pushed into the sea by the inexorably democratic Verrina. In the background of this lurid play moves the venerable figure of that Andrea Doria who rescued Genoa from France, brought her from heaven, as it were, a fine constitution, and governed her with paternal benevolence, only to see his good work undone in his eightieth year by the folly of his nephew, Giannettino. At the end he has to entreat "his children not to drive him out in his old age to dwell with foreigners, who ne'er would pardon the exalted state to which he rais'd his country." In 1798 "An Account of the Famous Conspiracy of Fiesco at Genoa in the Year 1547" was published in William Tooke's *Selections from the Most Celebrated Foreign Literary Journals*.

In addition to these plays, I should like to mention a pair of dramatic fantasies on Italian history which may help to show that, considered as a source for plays and poems, this subject was steadily gaining popularity. While not actually based on Italian history, George Galloway's *Admirable Crichton* (1802) and Matthew Gregory Lewis's *Adelgitha; or, The Fruits of a Single Error* (1806) flirt with it in a tantalizing way. Revived interest in the

Italianate Scot usually known as the Admirable Crichton seems to date from F. Douglas's *Life of James Crichton of Clunie* (published about 1760). This biography was soon followed by long accounts of his adventures in Thomas Pennant's *Tour in Scotland* (1771) and in the republication of Sir Thomas Urquhart's Παντοχρονοχρονον (1652) as *Tracts* (1774). From all these sources George Galloway, who described himself as a "tar" without education, seems to have taken hints for his tragedy. Into the customary story of the scholar-swordsman who, having unwittingly offended his comrade and pupil, Vincenzo Gonzaga, Prince of Mantua, in the matter of a favorite mistress, was murdered by him—even as he knelt, his own famous rapier pointed to his breast, to crave forgiveness—Galloway introduced several changes. Among others, he made the hero's light-o'-love into a staid matron, Durzillia, whose virtue Crichton is in the habit of defending against the villainous plots of the dissolute Prince Vincent. This latter, in Galloway's play, is never on very friendly terms with "SCOTIA's genial flow'r," being too hopelessly given to "Tartarian riot." Egged on by his tutor, Demando, "a mountain of vulgarity and vice," Vincent even causes a famous bravo or "gladiator" to murder Durzillia's husband. Crichton, needless to say, spits this same gladiator on his unerring sword, and offers to marry the persecuted widow himself. Disgusted with Italian vice, he decides to accompany Lord Howard back to Scotland, there to take over the education of Prince James, and get Elizabeth, on his way north, to liberate Queen Mary. It is just when he is persuading Durzillia to leave Italy that the catastrophe we know of overtakes him. True to the legend, if false to the spirit of this play, Crichton, "dressed in a Roman habit, masked, a drawn sword in his hand, disguising his voice, a guitar under his arm," outfences a band of roistering courtiers, but falls a victim to Prince Vincent's drunken malice. At the end of the play we leave

The widow pale lamenting for her bulwark,  
The children sighing for the orphans' tower,  
The grieving student lacking learning's prop. . .

Temporarily, at least, the wind was taken out of this conception by an appendix to John Black's *Life of Torquato Tasso* (1810), where

a thorough examination of all obtainable evidence forced the author to conclude that the famous Scot had been no more than an adventurous mountebank, killed in a pothouse quarrel.

Similar shadows from Italian history assume the leading rôles in "Monk" Lewis's *Adelgitha*. Though this play has for principals Robert Guiscard, the Norman conqueror of the South, and his famous wife, Gaita, their characters and deeds are altered beyond recognition. We are told that "the scene lies at Otranto . . . in the year 1080," but it soon becomes clear that Lewis has no respect for the story of Guiscard and Gaita as recorded in Gibbon. Into the mouth of the Norman brigand, of whom Gibbon asserted that "in the pursuit of greatness he was never arrested by the scruples of justice, and seldom moved by the feelings of humanity," he puts a series of speeches like the following:

Far distant be the hour when armour  
Again shall case my limbs! I'll ne'er refuse  
To sluice these veins whene'er thy welfare needs it,  
Beloved Apulia, but my soul abhors  
That man whose thirst of power or pride of conquest  
Distracts the globe, and builds with bleeding corpses  
The savage trophy of his vain renown.

Guiscard's terrific sense of justice makes him the implacable foe of all who offend against the integrity of the state or family. Thus he precipitates the tragic action, for Adelgitha, his wife, has in her unsuspecting youth been the victim of masculine treachery. Indeed, in the person of the so-called foundling, Lothair, she still keeps the evidence of her false step about her. Like the Gaita of Gibbon, she is bold and warlike, and Lewis enjoys echoing the historian's praise of her feats at the siege of Bari, where this "second Pallas, less skilful in arts, but not less terrible in arms, than the Athenian goddess, though wounded by an arrow, . . . stood her ground, and strove, by her exhortations and example, to rally the flying troops."<sup>22</sup> When Michael-Ducas, the exiled "Emperor of Byzantium," whose battles Guiscard is fighting against the rebel city of Durazzo, threatens, if she will not lie

<sup>22</sup> *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter LVI.

with him, to disclose her sin, of which he has accidentally learned, the warlike Amazon kills him. Fearing, however, that the blame for the murder will fall on her son, Lothair, she discloses all, and, assured that Robert loves her in spite of his sense of justice, commits suicide. Thus perished in Lewis the princess whom Guiscard is generally supposed to have murdered for political reasons. Michael-Ducas, the lecherous emperor, was thought by Gibbon and others to have been an impostor or straw figure whom Robert set up as an excuse for meddling in the affairs of the Eastern Empire. To the critics, who were not long in arraigning Lewis before the bar of historical accuracy, he answered that he had merely sought to give a preconceived plot " 'a local habitation and a name.' " That he should have pitched on an event from Italian history to body forth his moral was, perhaps, in 1806 a sign of the times. Lewis, in this as in so many respects, was a true barometer and forecast of the coming poetical weather.

Other straws in the wind were the numerous plays and stories of these days which used events from Italian history as a colorful background. The period of Joanna Baillie's *Basil: a Tragedy* (1798) was "supposed to be the sixteenth century, when Charles the Fifth defeated Francis the First at the battle of Pavia," while in *St. Leon: a Tale of the Seventeenth Century* (1799) William Godwin described this famous battle in words practically lifted from Robertson. The invasion of Italy by Charles VIII played a prominent part in the terror novel, *The Count di Novini* (1799), while Mary Charlton's *Pirate of Naples* (1801) opened with the celebration of the accession of Philip of Anjou to the Spanish and Neapolitan thrones in 1700. Caroline Symmons' play, *The Sicilian Captive* (1800), had for hero Raymond, Prince of Palermo, "the heir of Norman Tancred." Giuseppe A. Graglia gave the readers of his tale, *The Castle of Eridan* (1800), permission to lay it at will in the days of either Charles VII of France, Pope Paul II, or the Emperor Sigismund, while he took "the ground of [his] history," *The Labyrinth of Corcira* (1804), from the "sanguinary" Sicilian Vespers. Lord Heytesbury's *Montalto* (written about 1804) was laid in the papal states in the days of a *condottiere* whose career suggests that of Niccolò Piccinini, and Godwin's

*Faulkener* (1807) dated from "the autumn of the year 1669," just after Venice surrendered Candia to the Turks. Without actually dealing with Italian history, Mrs. Byrne's *Zosloya* (1806) was called "A Romance of the Fifteenth Century," and even a crude chapbook like Crookenden's *Horrible Revenge* (1808) was styled "A Romance of the 16th Century."

It must be confessed that all this diffused interest in Italian history is symptomatic without really indicating the exact nature and magnitude of the fever which was to develop. Though Italian "falls" and domestic tragedies fascinated the high romantics, it is probably true that their chief interest in Italian history lay, finally, in its illustrations of the quenchless spirit of republican freedom. In this respect Gibbon, Roscoe, and Noble had cross-furrowed English hearts, but the seed remained to be planted. They prepared the way, but it was really a French, not a native English, historian of Italy who stimulated the chief romantic interest in Italy's past, as we shall see in the final chapter.

ROBERT ANTHONY BROMLEY, HENRY FUSELI, RICHARD DUPPA,  
AND OTHERS: ITALIAN ARTISTIC HISTORY ACCLIMATIZED,  
USUALLY WITH HINTS FROM ROSCOE: 1795-1809

More or less related to the *Life of Lorenzo* were several signs of a stimulated interest in Italian art. It took chiefly two forms: first, a curiosity to know more about the infancy and adolescence of the arts; second, a desire to supplant the painfully academic approach to beauty through design, expression, color, and chiaroscuro by immediate and luminous appreciation. But the impossibility of foreign travel, except for the brief Peace of Amiens, made real progress in the knowledge and enjoyment of Italian art almost impossible. All that can be added on this subject within the limits of the present volume I will give in the next few paragraphs.

A few months before the *Life of Lorenzo*, appeared (1795) the second volume of Robert Anthony Bromley's *Philosophical and Critical History of the Fine Arts*, containing an account of the rise of the arts very similar to that in Roscoe. In addition to the early artists discussed by Roscoe, Bromley noticed Taffi, Franco

da Bologna, Verrocchio, Ghirlandaio, and Benozzo Gozzoli. At the other end of the history of Renaissance art he supplemented Roscoe, so to speak, with a review of the decay of painting in the hands of Romanelli, Sacchi, and Maratti. With Reynolds and Roscoe, Bromley agreed in considering Michelangelo the very "meridian" of that day which dawned so slowly and set so feebly. He was, however, rather less impassioned on the subject of this genius than Roscoe, never for a moment touching the transcendental heights of Reynolds. His work is most interesting, perhaps, for its insistence upon the moral purpose of painting—a standard which led him to ignore the Venetian painters almost entirely—and for its impatience with the early eighteenth-century English attitude toward Italian culture. This egotistic indifference, says Bromley, has nearly disappeared. His opinion of his grandfathers, as evidence of the distance we have travelled since 1755, is worth quoting at some length:

The east, the west, the north, and the south, with which they had intercourse, were considered as countries below the condition of Britain; and their inhabitants as a people whom Britons made happy with their trade; forgetting . . . to look for those . . . intellectual discoveries of which commerce is the happiest handmaid. . . . [T]he English sought, and associated with, the English even abroad; and having gone there from vanity, they returned with emptiness of mind. . . . To sum up our view of those times: if you call the people sober, you mistake them; if you call them wise, it was more in theories, and perhaps somewhat in their own conceit; if you call them liberal, it was in a local view; if you call them expensive, it was in the duller gratifications; if you call them curious and inquisitive, it was in the drier speculations; if you call them elegant and enlarged in any shape, it is the grossest flattery, without the least foundation in truth.<sup>23</sup>

Much more concerned with the spirit and meaning of art were the Italian writings of the half-Teutonic artist, Anton Raphael Mengs, done into English in 1796 as *Works*. On a medal of Mengs, reproduced on the English title-pages, he is described as "PICTOR PHILOSOPHUS." All through the eighteenth century, as we know,

<sup>23</sup> Vol. I (1793).



dilettants had professed to be preoccupied with design, color, and so on because these, in some mysterious way, shadowed forth the beau ideal. About the origin and precise nature of the beau ideal they were, however, vague, and usually defined it in such a way as to enable themselves to find its most notable manifestations in the sprightly elegance of the Venetians or the somber elegance of the Bolognese. On the other hand, Mengs, perhaps spurred by the growing epistemological idealism of the Germans, was willing to assert in all seriousness that the beau ideal was nothing less than the Platonic Idea, partly recognized in this world, partly supplied from memories of another. Though what his Spanish editor, Azara, called (in translation) Mengs's "Platonianism" is scattered all through the two volumes of his works, it is most evident in the "Reflections upon Beauty and Taste in Painting," where he affirms that "Beauty consists in the perfection of matter according to our ideas," and enchants us because it is "a remembrance of supreme perfection." This perfection and God being one, beauty is our nearest approach to Him on earth; its detection, the highest exercise of the soul. And so on. Mengs's editor was well aware that these and similar ideas "apparently ought not to have access in this age" of modest materialism. "Nevertheless we still find those who collect them" so assiduously that it has been affirmed "THAT NO IDEA OF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY IS SO OBFUSCATED THAT ONE MAY NOT HOPE FOR ITS BEING RENEWED IN THE MODERN." Mengs's criticism of the painters of the past is almost wholly confined to Raphael, Titian, and Correggio. Though he followed the academic tradition in looking for beauty—with him, divinity—in composition, coloring, and chiaroscuro, he upset the usual academic judgment by preferring Correggio to Titian and even Raphael himself. This preference, like Mengs's "Platonianism," was not ungenial to some of the high romantics, on whom his writings may readily be supposed to have had a certain amount of influence.

More theory, criticism, and history of Italian art were brought to English attention by the respective *Lectures on Painting* of Fuseli and Opie, Professors of Painting to the Royal Academy. The first three of Fuseli's lectures were delivered in 1801 (published the same year); the second three in 1810 (published, 1820); while

Opie's were all given in 1807 (published, 1809). Both professors<sup>24</sup> made liberal mention of the Pre-Raphaelites, but kept their highest praise, of course, for Raphael and Michelangelo. Both were tinged with the Platonic explanation of beauty and the transcendental origin of genius. Though Fuseli, himself a Teuton by birth, affected to discountenance Mengs's Platonism, the influence of the philosophical painter is apparent in his general enthusiasm for Correggio and in particular passages like this:

And though perhaps we should be nearer truth by ascribing the cause of Correggio's magic to the happy conformation of his organs, and his calm serenity of mind, than to Platonic ecstasies, a poet might at least be allowed to say "that his soul, absorbed by the contemplation of infinity, soared above the sphere of measurable powers, knowing that every object whose limits can be distinctly perceived by the mind must be within its grasp, and, however grand, magnificent, beautiful, or terrific, fall short of the conception itself, and be less than sublime."—In this, from whatever cause, consists the real spell of Correggio. . .

In contrast to Reynolds and Opie, Fuseli objected to the growing fashion of belittling Veronese and Tintoretto "with the contemptuous appellation of ornamental painters. . ." It seemed to him that the "sublimity" of Tintoretto's "Last Judgment" triumphed over all hypercriticism: "the storm in which the whole fluctuates, the awful division of light and darkness into enormous masses, the living motion of the agents, . . . and the harmony that rules the whirlwind of that tremendous moment must forever place it among the most astonishing productions of art."

This quotation is not from Fuseli's lectures, but from his *History of Art in the Schools of Italy*, a work which, though apparently well under way by 1802, was never completed in the author's lifetime, and not published till 1831.<sup>25</sup> This history of Italian art, comprising more than two hundred and fifty pages, was the most ambitious thing of its kind to be undertaken to date. Had it been completed and published before 1815, it would, for

<sup>24</sup> Fuseli was Professor of Painting from 1799 to 1804 and from 1810 to 1825; Opie, from 1805 to 1807.

<sup>25</sup> In *The Life and Writings of Henry Fuseli*, ed. by John Knowles.

the purposes of our study, have entirely superseded the comparatively brief and broken chronicles of Roscoe and Bromley. Its account of the rise of Italian painting would have been not only very much fuller and richer than theirs, but also several degrees more sympathetic to many of the early masters, bringing to English attention, almost for the first time, the names of Buffalmacco, Margaritone d'Arezzo, Taddeo Gaddi, Simone Memmi, Andrea Orcagna, the Lorenzetti, Botticelli, Fra Angelico, and dozens more. One of the things which made Fuseli lax in pushing this fine project to its conclusion may have been the fact that he used much of his biographical and critical material in a new edition of Matthew Pilkington's *Gentleman's and Connoisseur's Dictionary of Painters* (1805; reprinted in 1810). This was by far the best edition of this book to have appeared in England, Fuseli practically making it into a work of his own. Other books from which Englishmen of the time could learn something about the lives or works of the Italian artists were J. Salmon's *Description of the Works of Art of Ancient and Modern Rome* (1798-1800), George Tappan's *Professional Observations on the Architecture of the Principal Ancient and Modern Buildings in France and Italy* (1806), and John Gould's *Dictionary of Painters, Sculptors, Architects, and Engravers* (1810).

The chief place in Fuseli's *History of Art* was occupied by Michelangelo, the author devoting at least thirty pages to a Reynoldslike description of the life of the man who knew how to win immortality by refusing to have anything to do with "the imbecile forms of a degenerate race" or "the transient refinements of fashion or local sentiment, unintelligible beyond their circle and century to the rest of mankind. . ." On the other hand, Reynolds' view of this artist can hardly be said to have inspired Richard Duppa's *Life and Literary Works of Michael Angelo Buonarroti* (1806). Duppa, whom we have already come across in this chapter, was something of an artist, though the year after finishing this *Life* he gave up art as a career. Then thirty-seven years of age, he matriculated at Trinity College, Oxford, entered the Middle Temple in 1810, and graduated LL. B. at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, in 1814. In spite of his connection with art and his urge to write a biography of Michelangelo, Duppa does not seem

to have idolized the artist as much as might have been expected. If Fuseli is right where he says that Michelangelo "is detested by all who have no sense for him, whilst by those who enter his train of thought, or sympathize with him, he is adored," we are forced to conclude that Duppa was not entirely in harmony with the *terribilità* of his subject. He seems, indeed, to have sought to profit by the growing popularity of Michelangelo without being exceptionally fond of him. In 1801, for instance, he had published a popular *Selection of Twelve Heads from the Last Judgment of Michael Angelo*, and now he wrote the life of a man of whom the best he could say was that "His genius was vast and wild, by turns extravagant and capricious, rarely to be implicitly followed, but always to be studied with advantage." Duppa's biography is, as a matter of fact, little more than a compilation of facts and anecdotes from Vasari and Condivi, spiced with a few historical touches from Guicciardini. Though containing a number of the artist's letters and poems, it is much more an external than an inward record. But even the uninspired Duppa could not repress the drama inherent in the life of a man who, in pursuit of an ideal of almost superhuman dignity, defied popes, defended the liberties of his country, painted the Sistine Chapel, hung the dome of St. Peter's, and paid Platonic court to Vittoria Colonna. A second edition of the *Life* was called for in 1806, a third, in 1816. English readers seem, indeed, to have seen rather more in Duppa than meets the modern eye. For them the story of the book may very well have been charged with a certain amount of transcendental meaning by the memory of Sir Joshua's praise.

I wish it were possible for me to close this section, the last I shall have an opportunity to write on the rise of the romantic interest in Italian art, with the mention of a poem or two. But such were not forthcoming, largely, perhaps wholly, because it was impossible for Englishmen to visit those great monuments of beauty for which they had been steadily acquiring a deeper reverence ever since the days when Reynolds began to deliver his *Discourses* to the Royal Academy. Though the criticism of art had not been dramatically revolutionized, there had been a definite growth away from the old academic evaluation of pictures toward what we may call a romantic appraisal—dealing in inspiration,

aspiration, Platonism, and God. The war, such as it was, between the new criticism and the old was waged, as we have seen, largely over Michelangelo. If it left Raphael, Correggio, Guido Reni, and some others still standing, it threatened the Carracci, and bowled over most of the Venetian painters. In lieu of indigenous verses on the triumph of Michelangelo, I beg leave to insert a few, however bombastic, from Thomas Holcroft's translation of Stolberg's *Italian travels* (1796-97). Like other of his sentimental countrymen in the latter part of the eighteenth century, the German poet was anxious to acknowledge the long-misprized power of Michelangelo. In the Vatican he paid his first tribute of verse, it is true, to the ethereal-minded Raphael, making the "Grecian Muse" hail him as no less delightful than Plato himself. On the completion of this panegyric, however, earth heaved, tempests growled, and, bursting from

Concealing clouds, a phantom frowning stands,  
Accusing, threat'ning, dreadful in his ire!

Not long in divining the identity of this "potent" ghost, the poet appealed:

Jealous, perturbed spirit, be appeas'd:  
Avert thy wrath, for I confess thy pow'r.  
Deep of sublimity thy soul has drunk!  
At thy command, behold! the marble lives!  
Thy colours, lo! in magic terrors move!  
In pallid horrors dipt, they shake the soul!  
I honour, feel, and own thy just renown.

THOMAS JAMES MATHIAS, JOSEPH COOPER WALKER, WILLIAM  
PARR GRESWELL, WILLIAM COLLIER, CAPEL LOFFT,  
RICHARD WHARTON, HENRY FRANCIS CARY, NA-  
THANIEL HOWARD, JOHN NOTT, JOHN BLACK,  
BURNLEY, BOYD, HOOLE, AND OTHERS:  
ITALIAN LITERATURE ACCLIMATIZED,  
OFTEN UNDER THE DIRECT INFLU-  
ENCE OF ROSCOE: 1795-1810

While the major Italian epics had been pretty well defended and cultivated in England before the appearance of Roscoe's

*Lorenzo*, the minor epics, lyric poetry (Petrarch excepted), drama, and *novelle* still remained, if not untouched, at least untilled. In all these fields Roscoe did a certain amount of spade work, always enough to suggest what treasures were to be had for a little honest digging; and during the fifteen years after 1795 every department of Italian literature was thoroughly opened up and familiarized. By 1811 it had become possible for an Englishman, even one who could not read much Italian, to possess a competent and even rather extensive knowledge not only of all fields of Italian literature but of its history and criticism. This achievement was partly the result of that long defense of Italian literature so brilliantly stimulated by Baretti. More immediately it was due to the decisive efforts of Roscoe and his intimate friends and imitators. Because the material we are about to examine is abundant, I have found it convenient to treat what we may call the triumph of English interest in each department of Italian literature—epic, lyric, dramatic, and fictional—under a separate head. First of all, however, we should say a word about the triumph of English interest in the Italian tongue itself.

### *The Italian Language and Teachers*

We have already seen how the decade from 1785 to 1795 brought to Britain a crowd of new Italian teachers, including, among others, Giuspanio Graglia, Antonio Curioni, Gasparo Grimani, Guelfo Borzacchini, Antonio Montucci, Gaetano Polidori, F. Sastres, and Enrico Mario Tournier. Though all of these, with the possible exception of Graglia and Curioni, continued active during most of the sixteen years under consideration, the growing interest in Italian brought from Italy a fresh cohort of literati, most of whom seem to have been, to a greater or lesser extent, teachers. My list of these, though probably far from complete, includes Romualdo Zotti, Leonardo Nardini, Serafino Buoniuti, Vincenzo Peretti, Filippo Pananti, Gaetano Ravizzotti, Cesare Bruno, Giovanni Battista Cassano, Alessandro Maria Bandiera, Pietro Ricci Rota, G. B. Boschini, J. A. Favalli, F. Damiani, and a man whose Christian names I have failed to discover—Galignani. In addition to these, John Soilleux, George Bayley, and James

Boardman were engaged in smoothing the path which led to the enchanted world of Italian prose and poetry. Besides teaching, Peretti (1795), Soilleux (1795), Galignani (second edition, 1796), Ravizzotti (1797), Tournier (1802), Bayley (1804), and Bruno (1810) published grammars; while Zotti edited a London edition of Veneroni's famous *Maître italien* as *Grammaire française et italienne* (1800). By 1811 some of these grammars enjoyed as many as three or four editions. Peretti (1796) and Grimaldi (1799) furnished exercise books, while Boardman included Italian matter in his polyglot *Vocabulary* (about 1810). New editions of the dictionaries of Baretti, Bottarelli, and Giuspanio Graglia were brought out. Never in the history of the Italian language in England, Elizabethan times not excepted, had there been such a demand for competent instruction.

It was about this time that Italian definitely became a recognized branch of what was called "polite education," ranking beside, and in some cases superseding, French itself. In his *Italian Magazine* (1796) Nardini (?)<sup>20</sup> was pleased to find the ancient "taste for Italian literature, and esteem for the natives of that country, not at all diminished at present in England. The study of that most delightful and elegant language forms one branch of the education of the youth of both sexes." The anonymous editor of *Extracts from the Works of the Most Celebrated Italian Poets* (1798) was of the opinion that "the study of that elegant language, being now made a branch of polite education," had rendered interest in Italian literature almost "universal."

In addition to teaching their native tongue, many of the Italians noticed above stimulated English interest in Italian literature in ways which may best be noted at this point. Nardini, Boschini, and Zotti, followed at only a short distance by Montucci, Buonaiuti, Polidori, Tournier, and Cassano, were inveterate and unflagging editors of the Italian classics. Supervised and often financed by them, British presses printed most of the great, with many of the little, masterpieces of Italian letters. In addition

<sup>20</sup> The first two numbers of this magazine, all that were ever published, were printed in book form as *Italian Tracts* (1796). Nardini was almost certainly the editor, if not indeed the author, of most of the articles.

to reproductions of the classics, several notable anthologies were compiled, the most extensive being Nardini and Buonaiuti's *Saggi di prose e poesie de' più celebri scrittori d'ogni secolo* (1796-98), in which each of the six centuries of Italian literature was represented by a volume of carefully selected pieces. This anthology, including among its subscribers H. R. H. the Duke of Gloucester, H. R. H. the Duchess of York, the Dukes of Devonshire and Somerset, the Earls of Besborough, Derby, Digby, Guildford, Mornington, Ossory, and Southampton, the Marchionesses of Hertford and Worcester, dozens of barons headed by Lord Holland, and more than two hundred commoners headed by Joseph Cooper Walker, was probably, both for size and influence, the most important thing of its kind ever published in England. Other anthologies covering several departments of Italian literature were Peretti's *Guida alla pronunzia e all'intelligenza dell'italiano* (1798), the *Extracts from the Works of the Most Celebrated Italian Poets* (1798) already referred to, and Montucci's *Italian Extracts* (1806), intended as a supplement to the fourth edition of Galignani's lectures on Italian grammar. These collections, together with those covering a single department of Italian literature, will be introduced in their proper places in the succeeding narrative. J. A. Favalli, who taught Italian in Dublin, and P. R. Rota made translations from their native tongue. Sometimes the "professors" subordinated their teaching to the composition of original works in Italian, Buonaiuti and Pananti writing libretti for the London opera, while Polidori produced a series of "literary" dramas. Pananti, Polidori, Cassano, and, apparently, Nardini practised narrative or lyric poetry, or both. The value which their original works, usually published in London, had in making Englishmen feel that Italian literature was a going, not a defunct, concern can hardly be overestimated.

Though not himself a teacher of Italian, Lorenzo da Ponte, poet at the King's Theatre almost without break from 1794 to 1805, did a great deal to stimulate English interest in Italian literature by editing classics, publishing verses, and running a bookshop. Before going to London, Da Ponte, it will be remembered, was one of Mozart's librettists in Vienna; while later in



New York, whither he fled to escape imprisonment for debt, he became Professor of Italian in Columbia College (1825). In his naïve, charming, and untrustworthy *Memorie* Da Ponte takes to himself practically all the credit for that British interest in Italian literature which reached a kind of climax during the first years of the nineteenth century! Go to, said he to himself in 1800, "I must think about setting up a permanent shop for Italian books here [London], and must re-introduce a taste for our literature." <sup>27</sup> Having bought up a large collection of Italian books, he immediately began to prosecute his "favourite design of bringing back Italian literature to its earlier pre-eminence, since it was no longer esteemed as it had been in that noble city in the times of Gray, Spenser, Dryden, the great Milton, and so many others of 'the great school of highest song.'" At one time Da Ponte seems to have had as many as eight thousand Italian books on his shelves, including, besides the classics, fine editions of the critical works of "Muratori, Tiraboschi, Fabroni, and Signorelli, all writers of the first rank." A printed catalogue of his treasures drew to his shop "the principal gentlemen" in London, not to mention certain "appreciative and scholarly Englishmen" in whom Da Ponte says he kindled, by means of his books, a deep interest in the literary history of his country:

Among these were the renowned Roscoe and Walker to whom the literary fame of Italy owes so much, and to whom I supplied many works during the execution of their great undertaking, which afterwards helped me very much in bringing back the literature and writers of my own country to the position that was their due.

The success of this bookshop soon taught the other London booksellers what a profit was to be made in this field, "and the price of Italian books went up excessively." According to himself, the host of Italian teachers we have already mentioned were merely so many aides-de-camp who helped Da Ponte to restore Italian literature to English attention:

I must in justice mention that a large number of cultured, learned, and respected Italians, instead of slandering and maligning *more*

<sup>27</sup> All quotations from L. A. Sheppard's translation of the *Memorie* as the *Memoirs of Lorenzo da Ponte* (1929).

*latronum* the zeal of my attempt to diffuse and restore the knowledge of our language, patriotically and heartily used every means to further it, not without advantage to themselves and others. Among these the first place must be given to Leonardo Nardini and Pananti, who were excellent philologists and grammarians and good poets, and not far behind them were Polidori,<sup>28</sup> Boschini, Damiani, and Zotti, not to mention many others.

But, says Da Ponte in his modest way, "the man who chiefly helped to make my plan a success was Mr. Mathias." Not content with the efforts of the Italian teachers, this "great and revered man" himself

reprinted a considerable number of our classics, furnishing them with learned prefaces and notes, and persuading his compatriots with his distinguished pen that it was a most profitable thing for those who cultivated the humaner letters to add to the Greek and Latin classics a knowledge of the treasures of the Arno.

Affection for Da Ponte, admiration for his bookshop, and love of Italian *canzoni*—he was very fond of one written by Da Ponte on the death of Joseph II—led Mathias to keep the future professor at Columbia out of the debtors' prison as long as possible. When Da Ponte was about to lose his bookshop for endorsing the worthless bills of the Haymarket impresario, Taylor, Mathias invited him to breakfast, rebuked him for his weakness, and asked him to read aloud Petrarch's *canzone* beginning, "Quell'antiquo mio dolce empio signore." When Da Ponte reached the line, "Tal merito ha chi ingrato serve," Mathias "cried in a mournful tone which seemed to come from his heart, 'That is the lot of my poor Da Ponte,'" told him to go home, and in less than half an hour sent him a present of £600!

Thomas James Mathias, whom we have already encountered as the panegyrist of Roscoe's *Lorenzo*, was not only an enthusiastic reader but a fluent writer of Italian prose and verse, and has been called "the best English scholar in that language since the time of Milton." He is supposed to have learned Italian from Agostino Isola at Cambridge, where he was Scholar in 1771, Fellow in 1776, and M.A. in 1777. In 1782 he succeeded his father, Vin-

\* For "Polidoro."

cent Mathias, as subtreasurer to Queen Charlotte, afterwards becoming treasurer, and librarian of Buckingham Palace. In 1817 he retired for reasons of health to southern Italy, where he died in 1835 covered with honors for his really invaluable work in popularizing the Italian language and literature in England. He was, to give a few of his titles, a Fellow of the Royal Society, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, a Pastore Arcade in Rome, a Corresponding Member of the Accademia della Crusca<sup>29</sup> in Florence, and a Corresponding Associate of the Società Pontaniana in Naples. Throughout a long life he had endeavored almost hourly, it seems, to bring Englishmen to appreciate the immense vigor, beauty, and depth of Italian epic and lyric poetry. He was the master spokesman of that principle now pretty well established in Britain: that English poetry could be resurrected only by a return to the precept and practice of those Italian writers from whom Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton had taken so many hints. From *The Pursuits of Literature* (1794-97) to his edition of *The Works of Thomas Gray* (1814) he never lost a chance to praise the Italian writers for their sublimity and to recommend them to the attention of English poets. In a *Lettera agli eruditi e culti inglesi amatori della lingua e della letteratura e della poesia italiana* (written and probably published in 1808) he speaks of dispelling the fog in which much Italian poetry still lay wrapped in England as "a delightful and long-dreamt-of enterprise." With the various Italian teachers, William Roscoe, Joseph Cooper Walker, and others whom we shall soon come across, in mind, he writes:

I too longed to coöperate, in so far as my powers permitted, in the *Resurrection of the Italian Language, Literature, and Poetry* in England in all their old and accustomed vigor; holding them (as indeed I still hold them) most worthy of being valued by princes and by great writers devoted to the gravest subjects, as they were in the century, above all others poetical, of our august and regal Elizabeth, sovereign protectress of arms, arts, studies, and poets.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Reestablished in 1811. Those Italians who were indignant at its ever having been abolished spoke of it as having been "restabilized."

<sup>30</sup> My translation; capitals and italics by Mathias. The same applies to the following quotation.

In the same letter he expresses a desire that, under royal protection, there should be erected in the English universities "*a Chair expressly devoted to the Universal Italian Literature*, in order to pay worthy honor to its followers and professors, to promote their cause, and to acquire for the Tuscan tongue a stable and permanent domicile *among the English*."

Of Mathias's opinion of individual Italian writers we shall have something to say as we go along. Meanwhile, our short review of the activities of these teachers and editors of Italian books should give us some idea of what to expect in the following pages.

### *Epic Poetry*

The years between 1795 and 1811 were distinguished, as may readily be imagined, by unparalleled reading of the Italian epics in the original. Tasso enjoyed a pair of London editions, the first edited by Nardini and Polidori (1796), the second, by Zotti (1806); while Ariosto was subjected to a "castigation" by Nardini (1801). If we discount the "Londra"-Leghorn publications of 1778 and 1781, these will be seen to be, respectively, the third and fourth British editions of the *Gerusalemme*, and the third British edition of the *Furioso*, to appear since 1755. The same year, 1808, saw the advent of two London editions of the *Divina commedia*, one by Zotti, the other by Boschini, the first to be actually printed in the islands. Monti's short Dantesque epic on the death of Nicolas Jean Hugou de Bassville was edited by Thomas James Mathias as *La rivoluzione francese* (1804). Mock epics were represented solely by Lorenzo da Ponte's edition of his friend, Giovanni Battista Casti's, *Animali parlanti* (1803), on every page of which the editor assured his readers of finding "quella originalità ch'è figlia primogenita d'un gran genio." In 1803 Da Ponte advertised what seems to have been a London edition of Tasso's *Rinaldo*, redacted by himself and to be had for four shillings, but I have never come across an example of it. Many of the various anthologies of Italian literature contained selections from the epic poets. The most important of these, Nardini and Buonaiuti's *Saggi di prose e poesie* (1796-98) contained 185 octaves from the *Gerusalemme*, including, among others, the episodes of Olindo and Sofronia,

the Council of Demons, Tancredi in the Enchanted Forest, the Duel of Tancredi with Clorinda, and the Palace of Armida; 140 octaves from the *Furioso*, including the episodes of Olimpia Deserted, Astolfo in the Moon, and the Duel of Ruggiero with Bradamante; and about 700 *terzine* from all three parts of the *Commedia*, including, to name only a few, the episodes of Francesca, Pier della Vigna, Ugolino, Casella, Malco Lombardo, Matelda, Cacciaguida, and St. Peter. together with three scenes dominated by the benignant figure of Beatrice.<sup>31</sup> From Boiardo's, not Berni's, *Orlando innamorato* Nardini and Buonaiuti gave part of the episode of the Garden of Medusa; from Pulci's *Morgante Maggiore*, the Description of Antea and the Battle between Morgante and Margutte; nor did they entirely neglect Trissino's *Italia liberata dai goti*, Girolamo Graziani's *Conquisto di Granata*, or Marino's *Strage degli innocenti*. From the latter's *Adone* they gave enough selections to indicate that, though deservedly censured, its poet was "pieno di bellezze tutte nuove e tutte originali." The wealth of the Italian mock heroic epic they tried to suggest by selections from Francesco Bracciolini's *Scherzo degli dei*, Tassoni's *Secchia rapita*, Giovanni Battista Lalli's *Moscheide*, Lorenzo Lippi's *Malmantile racquistato*, and Forteguerri's *Ricciardetto*. The anonymous compiler of *Extracts from the Works of the Most Celebrated Italian Poets* (1798) gave, along with several other short selections, the episodes of Francesca and Ugolino from Dante; those of the Fairy Morgana, and Durlindana, Orlando's sword, from Boiardo; those of Erminia among the Shepherds, Tancredi at the Tomb of Clorinda, and Odoardo and Gildippe from Tasso; and that of Cloridano and Medoro from Ariosto. These he accompanied with translations by Boyd, Hayley, Hoole, and a person named Andrews, whom, since I have been able to learn nothing of him, I suspect to have been the anthologist himself. In his *Italian Extracts* (1806) Antonio Montucci included short selections from all three parts of the *Divina*

<sup>31</sup> Not in Toynbee. No copy of this important anthology is listed in the British Museum *Catalogue*. My own copy, picked up some years ago, is "nicely bound in russia," as the booksellers say, and shows signs of careful study.

*commedia*; the Defeat of the Amazons from Boccaccio's *Teseide*; Zerbino's Death, the Siege of Biserta, and the Duel of Ruggiero with Rodomonte from Ariosto; and the Death of Clorinda, the Assault on Jerusalem,<sup>32</sup> and the Duel of Argante with Tancredi from Tasso.

All this reading in the epic poets was bound to give rise to some fresh translating. The urge to render Tasso and Ariosto was somewhat cooled, of course, by the continued popularity of Hoole's so-called "masterful" versions. Most of the translators of the period turned to Dante, as yet not wholly and certainly not successfully mastered, with side glances at Ariosto, Tasso, Boiardo, Marino, and Tassoni.

As for Ariosto, Hoole's version was reprinted in 1799, 1807, and 1810, while certain episodes were freshly translated by Richard Wharton, the third son of that Dr. Thomas Wharton who was the friend and correspondent of Gray, by Hudson Gurney, and by Mrs. Mary Ware. Wharton, then sitting in Parliament for the City of Durham, published the stories of Caligorante and Orillo and of Angelica and Medoro in *Fables* (1804); Gurney translated most of the first canto of the *Furioso* in *Fragments* (about 1808); while Mrs. Ware paraphrased the Rescue of Olimpia in *Poems* (1809). Wharton's wooden couplets, in which he has an irritating way of changing the concrete and startling detail for a euphemistic generality, are certainly no improvement on Hoole. It is interesting to note, however, that Wharton was especially fond of a story once branded as the most puerile in all Italian romance: that of the giant who, before Astolfo discovered the secret of his charmed hair, could never be permanently dismembered:

Now from his wrist Astolfo lopt a hand;  
Now the whole arms lay bleeding on the sand; . . .  
But still Orillo, safe from death or pain,  
His limbs collected as they dy'd the plain.

As translated by Wharton, the episode of Angelica and Medoro included the night raid which Medoro and his friend, Cloridano,

<sup>32</sup> Canto XVIII.

made on the tents of the Christians. Though not adapted to the war and love scenes, Wharton's stiff couplets sound well enough in those ironical apostrophes which Ariosto, once he has got Angelica into the peasant's bed, addresses to her famous lovers:

Oh Agrican! long number'd with the dead,  
 Could'st thou again uprear thy awful head,  
 How meanly would'st thou prize this fatal fair,  
 And curse thy love, that gave the world to war!

More lively than Wharton's versions is Gurney's translation of the episode in which Rinaldo and Ferrau fight over Angelica and, on her escaping, unite to pursue her through the forest. His stanza form is an imitation of Spenser's, riming a, b, b, a, c, c, d, d, a, the last line being appropriately lengthened. As an example of this unusual stanza form we may take Gurney's naïve paraphrase of Ariosto's really ironical commendation of those knights of old who, having sworn not to harm one another till they had again put a woman in harm's way, gave each other implicit trust:

O! noble hearts, whom sacred honor binds,  
 Occasion tempts not and no crime enslaves;  
 Whom Truth, untainted and unyielding, saves  
 From Love that urges, as from Zeal that blinds!—  
 Such were the chiefs of yore—two faiths, one flame,  
 These own'd; these smarting from the battle came;  
 Through woods obscure, through lonely glens they flew,  
 Nor either e'er one glance suspicious threw,  
 Nor e'er one doubtful thought pass'd transient o'er their minds.

Mrs. Ware "of Ware Hill, Herts." translated the story of how Olimpia (so often forsaken in these pages) was at last revenged on Bireno, after having been rescued from a sea monster by Orlando. This translation was made for the benefit of a friend "who did not recollect the subject of the fine picture at Lord Scarsdale's, Derbyshire, of Olympia chained to the rock." I am afraid it was moral, not poetic, diffidence which caused Mrs. Ware to pass over Ariosto's famous description of the naked heroine with the meager assurance that

All that the waving drapery should enfold  
 Was perfect form'd, in Nature's choicest mould.

New translations of Tasso in these days seem to be almost entirely wanting, a fact which may be accounted for by the appearance of fresh editions of Hoole's *Jerusalem* in 1797, 1802, 1807, and 1810. The only thing I have to offer is a blank-verse version of the Death of Clorinda, appended to Sir Brooke Boothby's *Sorrows, Sacred to Penelope* (1796), in which the scene where Tancredi unwittingly rejoices in the wounds of his sweetheart is rendered as follows:

Now the last star glimmer'd with paler ray,  
And ruddy streaks shot o'er the eastern hill;  
Tancred, exulting, sees his enemy's blood  
Issue in copious streams, himself scarce hurt.  
O, still to fate how blind! Fortune's vile sport  
Is poor humanity; O wretched man,  
Thou little know'st how dear will cost thy joy,  
Each precious drop paid with a sea of tears.

I can also report a play on the story of Olindo and Sofronia, a theme already given dramatic treatment, as we have seen, by Abraham Portal (1758). In *Orlando and Seraphina; or, The Funeral Pile*, performed at the Theatre-Royal in Norwich and printed in that place about 1799, Francis Lathom changed not only the names of the two chief characters but several important points in the story told by Tasso. To be sure, the lovers vie with each other, as usual, in assuming the guilt for the stolen statue, welcome the same fiery doom, and are rescued by an Amazon. On the other hand, the wizard in Ismeno, Alladin's prime minister, is entirely swallowed up by the *wexir*. At the end this cruel councillor, himself the sole persecutor of the lovers, turns out to be the father of Seraphina (Sofronia)! In addition, he is stabbed to death by the Princess of Persia, Clorinda, when she stages her last-minute rescue of the fire-clad lovers. It is also to be noted that Lathom gives Clorinda a warmer motive to this deed than disinterested chivalry. She, it seems, is violently in love with Orlando (Olindo). In Act III she proposes to him, but, finding him devoted to Seraphina, is forced to stifle her disappointment in the great burst of heroism with which she brings the drama to an end. This play, in contrast to Portal's, follows Tasso in exculpating Alladin from lust for Seraphina.



But it was, as we said, Dante who received the greatest oblation of new renderings. In *Poems on Various Occasions* (1800) William Collier, who signed himself "Senior Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge," followed Jennings in producing detached versions of both the Francesca and Ugolino episodes.<sup>33</sup> In rendering the latter, Collier was himself followed by Richard Wharton (*Fables*, 1804), who also gave a version of *Inferno* III. New translations of the whole *Inferno* were published by Henry Francis Cary (1805-6), still famous for this work, and by Nathaniel Howard, a native of Plymouth (1807). Neither of these translators seems to have been satisfied with the *Infernos* of Rogers or Boyd, the latter of which had reappeared in 1802, accompanied by florid paraphrases of the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, as *The Divina Commedia . . . Translated*—the first complete English version of Dante's poem to be published. All together, these translations, most of which were widely and sometimes sympathetically reviewed, gave Dante a definite and even exalted place in the contemporary English literary consciousness. If they did not do for him what Hoole had accomplished for Tasso and Ariosto, it was perhaps because Dante is not susceptible of the same degree of popularization as the bards of chivalry. Certain it is that Cary's Dante, when completed, was with the passing years to enjoy all the popularity the market would bear, and to take its place as one of the greatest English translations from a foreign tongue. Here, merely for the sake of completeness, I will give my readers a taste of the powers of these new translators of Dante. All, with the exception of Wharton, seem to have considered blank verse the most fitting vehicle for the Italian Milton. Let their hands be exercised, as usual, on the perennial troubles of Francesca and Ugolino. In Collier the former tells the origin of her sin as follows:

"One day for pleasure we took up the tale  
Of Lancilotto, and read his tender loves:  
We were alone, suspecting nought of harm,  
When more than once, in reading, while we rais'd  
Our eyes in mutual glance, the colour left

<sup>33</sup> Not in Toynbee.

Our cheeks;—but one, one incident produc'd  
 Our ruin;—as we read the dear delight  
 Which on her lips so fond a lover prov'd,  
 He, who henceforth will never quit my side,  
 Prest with his trembling lips a kiss on mine;  
 The book, and he who wrote it, was our pander.—  
 That day we read not any farther."

The same episode in Howard's none too facile *Inferno* becomes:

"We, lost in tender joy,  
 Perus'd how Launcelot was thrall'd in love.  
 Alone, without suspicion, we remain'd.  
 Glanc'd from the rich description, oft our eyes  
 Together met, the colour fled our cheeks;  
 But one seductive point ensnar'd us both:  
 When first we read of that dear, long'd-for smile,  
 Kiss'd by the lover with such rapturous force,  
 Paulo, who ne'er shall quit my sight, arose,  
 And prest my lips, all trembling with desire.  
 "Perish the volume, and the writer both!  
 Insidious panders! ah! that day no more  
 We read—"

From Wharton's melodramatic account of Ugolino in the dungeon we may omit the preliminary horrors, and begin with the fourth morning—

"Then Gaddo, stretch'd before me, feebly cried  
 For help (in vain) to me, and lingering died; . . .  
 Each, clinging to his life, with slow decay  
 Dropt, as exhausted Nature's powers gave way,  
 And writh'd in various forms the famish'd infants lay. }  
 "Now ebbing fast to death, my balls of sight  
 In vain I roll'd to catch the guiding light;  
 And crawling on the ground my hands I laid  
 On my dead sons, and call'd each darling shade—  
 Three days I call'd; till Death at last prevail'd,  
 And Famine clos'd the scene, though Sorrow fail'd."

Finally, we may note that in Cary's *Inferno* the version of these woes which has so deservedly outlived all others runs:

"When we came  
 To the fourth day, then Gaddo at my feet

Outstretch'd did fling him, crying, 'Hast no help  
 For me, my father!' There he died; and e'en  
 Plainly as thou seest me, saw I the three  
 Fall one by one 'twixt the fifth day and the sixth:  
 Whence I betook me, now grown blind, to grope  
 Over them all, and for three days aloud  
 Call'd on them who were dead. Then, fasting got  
 The mastery of grief."

From Boyd's translations of the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* we need give no samples. The raptures and roses of his peculiar poetical "adornments," the lilies and languors of his paraphrastic procedure, and the exigencies of his ill-mastered stanza form combine to obscure the strong thoughts of Dante in a haze from which they are seldom able to break free. To him, however, must be given the credit for getting the first complete translation of Dante before the English-reading public, thus preparing the way for the appearance of similar works in the future. Nor did his perseverance in translation go entirely unrewarded. By the time he published his version of the whole *Commedia*, the humble incumbent of Killeigh, near Tullamore, had become "Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount Charleville," and passed in London as something of a literary light.

Other translations from the Italian epic poets include a few octaves from Marino's *Gerusalemme distrutta* in Collier's *Poems on Various Occasions* (1800), the episodes of the Castle of Alataripa and the Garden of Medusa from Boiardo (Berni's *rifacimento*) in Wharton's *Fables* (1804), and the story of Diana and Endymion from Tassoni's *Secchia rapita* in M. M. Clifford's *Poems* (1808). Boyd also translated Monti's *Bassvilliana* as *The Penance of Hugo, a Vision on the French Revolution, in the Manner of Dante* (1805). Some samples of this poem, in which the murdered ambassador to Rome is made to do expiatory penance for the excesses of the Revolution, we have already encountered in these pages. The only other of these translations worth mentioning is Wharton's Boiardo. His selections are the very cream of Boiardo's knightly adventures in both the horrific and the amorous kinds. These, if not the first translations from Boiardo in the days we are considering, are at least the first of importance.

Those by Andrews, included in the anonymous *Extracts from the Works of the Most Celebrated Italian Poets* (1798), are confined to delightful descriptions of Orlando's sword and of the Fairy Morgana, failure to grasp whose forelock of yellow hair got some of the paladins into serious trouble. The adventure of the Castle of Altaripa is by way of being, by contrast, the most gruesome story in Italian romance. Even the stout heart of Rinaldo quailed at the sight of the dark castle, perched on a promontory, its walls hung around with bodies mangled by the monstrous son of Marchino, Lord of Aronda. For lust of the erstwhile mistress of this castle, one Stella, Marchino had murdered her husband and all her defenders. Still preserving her honor, Stella had revenged herself by applying to Marchino's slighted wife. In a desperate rage this latter consented to quarter both her children by Marchino, feeding their bodies to him for supper. When the triumphant Stella was allowed to present him, on a charger, the heads of the children he had just eaten, Marchino killed her—then satisfied his fatal lust, in defiance of God and man, upon her body. From that horrid intercourse sprang, as we know, a terrible monster whose fierce craving for human flesh threatened, when left unsatisfied, to shake down the somber castle in which he was imprisoned. Without the help of his spurned Angelica, Rinaldo himself, next to Orlando the foremost knight of Christendom, would have fallen a victim to this iron-scaled beast. Against this terrible tale Wharton set the magnanimous adventure of the Garden of Medusa, which, being known to most readers in the analogues of Boccaccio or Chaucer,<sup>34</sup> does not need to be described here. Wharton's couplets, either too dry or too melodramatic—he never seems to have been able to strike the mean represented by his original—do not do these grand, if gaudy, stories justice.

As for favorable criticism of the Italian epic poets, that too enjoyed a practically undisputed triumph in England in these days. The mildly dissenting voices of Nathan Drake<sup>35</sup> or G. T.<sup>36</sup> were

<sup>34</sup> The *Decamerone*, X, 5, and "The Franklin's Tale."

<sup>35</sup> *Literary Hours*; or, *Sketches Critical and Narrative* (1798).

<sup>36</sup> "Remarks on the Principal Italian Poets" in the *Monthly Magazine* (July, 1799).

drowned in the praises of Roscoe, Mathias, and their followers, including Joseph Cooper Walker and John Black. For years Englishmen had been slowly learning to take the Italian poets at the value set on them by Italians themselves. Now, under the leadership and guidance of Mathias, they seem to have at last succeeded. Mathias was anxious, of course, that Englishmen should prize Italian poetry for its colorful description, its powerful character-drawing, and its deep pathos—a lesson they had had dinned into them from the very day Baretto first set foot in England. He also wanted their pleasure in it to be heightened by that historical appreciation which attends a thorough knowledge of the political and social conditions under which a given work of art has been produced. Accordingly, he edited for English use certain manuals of Italian literary criticism and copious selections from the best Italian historians of their native literature. In London itself he brought out editions of Benedetto Menzini's *Arte poetica italiana* (1804) and Giovanni Vincenzo Gravina's *Della ragion poetica* (1806); made a selection, *Commentarj intorno all'istoria della poesia italiana* (1803), from Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni's *Istoria della volgar poesia*; and culled a three-volume *Storia della poesia italiana* (1803) from Girolamo Tiraboschi's monumental *Storia della letteratura italiana* (first published, 1772-82). Though both Menzini and Gravina's arts of poetry were a little old-fashioned, they contained beautifully clear defenses of the romantic interest in color, character, and passion; while from Crescimbeni and Tiraboschi English readers may be assumed to have gained that particular depth of understanding which is said to make affection inevitable.<sup>37</sup> In addition to furnishing his countrymen with all this theory and information about Italian poetry, Mathias never stopped exhorting them to love the great Italians. His *Pursuits of Literature*

<sup>37</sup> Additional Italian criticism of Italian epic poets is to be found in the notes with which Nardini and Buonaiuti dignified their *Saggi di prose e poesie*, and in miscellaneous articles in Nardini's (?) *Italian Magazine*, which failed after the first two numbers. These numbers, published in book form as *Italian Tracts*, contain an article, "On Dante," in which this poet is especially praised for the rich, vivid, and entirely animated images that have led him to be "justly styled, *il poeta dell'evidenza*. Truth is the characteristic of his verse, and nothing is really beautiful but truth." This reference is not in Toynbee.

(1794-97) is, for instance, profusely illustrated with analogues from and allusions to the chief epic poets. In vindication of this practice he says: "I would not have any one think that an appeal to the higher poets of modern Italy is either trifling or disgraceful. No man ever felt the power of poetry, if he refused his homage to Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, and Tasso; I mean, if their language was familiar to him." After averring that Dante's "draught of men and their passions is eternal," and that Ariosto shares with Homer and Alonso de Ercilla the distinction of being the victor in heroic verse, he concludes that Italy's "mighty masters" must never be called "frivolous and light"—"they strengthen and harmonize both the intellect and the ear."

We may affirm, then, that by 1811 many cultivated Englishmen were not only thinking very warmly of the Italian epic writers but were ranking three of them at least, Dante, Ariosto, and Tasso, in the same class with Homer, Virgil, and Milton. Evidence of the high esteem in which they were held is amply furnished by John Black's *Life of Torquato Tasso; with an Historical and Critical Account of His Writings*, published in Edinburgh in 1810 in two beautiful quarto volumes. At the time of publication Black, a Scot and friend of Tytler, now Lord Woodhouselee, was little over thirty. Though his book won him the degree of LL. D., he never seems to have enjoyed much preferment in the Church, being confined till late in life to the meager living of Coylton in Ayrshire. Black says that he chose to write of Tasso because of the psychological interest of his life, because of the eminence of his poetry, and because of his influence on "the best of our bards." With the help of Crescimbeni, Tiraboschi, and Serassi's *Vita di Torquato Tasso* (1785), he gave what seems to be in all respects an accurate and well-considered account of the poet's "toilsome, eventful, and melancholy life." In his pursuit of truth Black found it necessary to tear to shreds the story, albeit recently confirmed in Walker's *Historical Memoir on Italian Tragedy* (1799), of the poet's daring love for the Este princess, their mutual pangs, and the iniquitous incarceration. This latter he was inclined, as a matter of fact, to set down to the kindness of a duke who took this means of saving Tasso, rather too much given to wine and walking in the rain, from pneumonia. Still,

the undoubted evidence of Tasso's "mental alienation," compared by Black to that of Cowper and Rousseau, gave those who wished to believe in the old version of the story a peg to hang the rags on. And who would give them up?

As for Black's estimate of Tasso's poem, that was, of course, unboundedly high. Speaking of the recent growth of interest in Italian literature, he had to report that "in spite of all that has been effected, much still remains to be done before we shall have become sufficiently acquainted with the masters of the fathers of our poetry; yet, till this be done, we shall have but a comparatively imperfect notion of the noblest productions of English literature." In the process of remedying this defect, especially in so far as Tasso was concerned, Black once more raked the now thoroughly crisped French critics, Boileau, Bouhours, and Le Bossu, over the coals, affirming that "in proportion as a person is himself possessed of poetical genius, of a vivid imagination, and a tender heart, in that proportion shall Tasso be admired."

Never was character, or imagery, or scenery, more beautifully delineated; never did genius lend to love magic so seductive. In what other poem are we presented with situations so affecting; with incidents so well calculated to make the tear of grief or of pity flow? . . . Never did poet understand like Tasso the distribution of light and shade; that art by which we are conducted from the din and horror of war to the asylum of peace, or amidst the bowers of love. Add to this a style varying with the subject, but always noble: sometimes solemn as the pealing organ, sometimes softer than the breeze-tuned lyre.

It is not necessary to point out how thoroughly Black had learned the lesson of Italian criticism, a lesson which led him to put in a good word, whenever possible, for the other Italian poets. While he could not admit that the academicians of the Crusca had been right in preferring Ariosto to Tasso, he said a number of pleasant things about the former and his predecessor, Boiardo, whose *Orlando innamorato*, in Berni's version, he found "fully as entertaining as the poem of Ariosto." Black abounds in references to Dante.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Not in Tynbee.

British interest in the mock heroic epics of Italy led Black's elderly friend, Joseph Cooper Walker, whose life we shall mention in connection with his books on Italian drama, to write *Memoirs of Alessandro Tassoni* (finished in 1810, but not published till 1815). Walker enlivened his rather dull biography of "the critic, the annalist, and the politician" with a long analysis of that work which will make the poet "live forever in the memory of the lovers of poetry." Holding the *Secchia rapita* to be the best, as well as the first, true mock heroic poem—the inspiration of Dryden, Pope, and Garth—Walker sought to "enable the mere English reader to form some idea of the whole," and to inspire some gifted scholar of Italian to render, by a complete translation, justice to "the archetype" of one of the English language's "proudest boasts—*The Rape of the Lock*." His critique of the poem he "adorned" with four or five short translations, made in Spenserians by his friend, the Reverend Henry Boyd. In attempting to define the peculiar charm of the mock heroic as practised by Tassoni, Walker wrote:

While his sarcastic vein flows freely, we are delighted with the fertility of his fancy, and the brilliancy of his wit. He passes from grave to gay with the rapidity of thought. While we are gazing, with rapture, on a sublime or beautiful picture, a grotesque image rushes before us. It vanishes, and our admiration is again excited. Again a smile is raised—and again we are serious. In short, the variety is endless. It may be said that the author now borrows the pencil of Correggio, now that of Michelagnolo, and then the burine of Callot.

The influence which this type of Italian poem was to exercise on certain of the romantic poets can be deduced from the applicability of the above to a mock heroic like *Don Juan*.

One of the most interesting evidences of English interest in the Italian epic poets is the extent to which the heroes and heroines of Mrs. Radcliffe and other novelists of the time were given to reading them. Next to scenery, Mrs. Radcliffe's harassed girls loved to seek consolation in the *romanzatori*. Emily in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* was devoted to the "wild imagery and rich invention" of Ariosto, while Ellena in *The Italian* more often turned to Tas-



so when seeking "to banish every painful memory from her mind."<sup>39</sup> When Angela in Mary Charlton's *Pirate of Naples* sought to lighten her torments by reading her dead mother's favorite copy of the *Orlando furioso*, she was merely imitating a Radcliffe heroine *ad unguem*. In Sydney Owenson's *Novice of Saint Dominick* (1805) Imogen and her lovers, De Sorville and De Montargis, were simply steeped in the poetry of Dante, Tasso, and Ariosto, whose unhappy lives they often discussed, and whose verses they were continually introducing into their everyday conversation. When she was a little girl, a kind canoness once told Imogen that

"the human mind, in its progressive state, is still propelled toward perfection, and gradually shakes off its errors. In the words of an Italian poet:

Come d'autunno le foglie  
L'uno apresso delle altra infin che'l tamo  
Prinde alla terra tutte le sue spoglie."<sup>40</sup>

When she later visited Italy, Imogen said to her guardian, De Sorville:

"Do you know, my dear sir, I should like infinitely to perform a classic pilgrimage through Italy, and pay my homage at the many shrines it contains, sacred to the remains of departed genius. Pensively would I wander to the convent of St. Dominick in Ferrara to pour the oblation of a tear on the tomb of Ariosto, and, ere its trace was yet effaced from my cheek, direct my steps to the blue hills of Euganné, where repose the ashes of Petrarch; while at Pausilippo I would—"

Later, when she had ascended from the lovely scenery near the Tyrrhene into the impending heart of the Apennines, Imogen remarked to De Sorville that

<sup>39</sup> To Ellena's lover, Vincentio Vivaldi, or at least to Mrs. Radcliffe, it seemed that the Hebrew inscription over the door of the torture chamber of the Inquisition should have been taken from Dante, in as much as every feature of the place "seemed to say, *Hope, that comes to all, comes not here!*"—a Dante reference overlooked by Toynbee.

<sup>40</sup> Not in Toynbee. These lines, *Inferno* III, should read:

Come d'autunno si levan le foglie  
L'una apresso dell'altra, infin che il ramo  
Vede alla terra tutte le sue spoglie. . .

"such a scene as this is finely suited to the sublime but gloomy genius of Dante, as are the rich and glowing landscapes we have left, to the airy and animated fancy of Ariosto."

She then repeated some passages from the *Inferno* and the *Orlando Furioso* in proof of her assertion; to which the chevalier delightedly assented, and repeated himself a few more equally appropriate quotations.

It is interesting to note that Miss Owenson's characters never trouble to translate their quotations. The frequent occurrence of these in a popular novel is, I submit, one of the most striking proofs of the widespread interest which Englishmen came to take in the epic poets of Italy during the first decade of the nineteenth century. This novel is said to have been read several times by Pitt in his last illness. Its author, who later became Lady Morgan, was in after years one of the staunchest champions of the Italian struggle for political independence.

#### *Lyric and Short Poems*

If it is true that in 1795 much of the wealth of Italian lyric poetry still lay concealed from Englishmen, it is equally true that by 1811 most of it had been brought to light. The whole mass of sonnets, *canzoni*, and *canzonette* from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century was turned over and over, and its brightest specimens presented to British readers either in the original or in English dress. The poets themselves were given, of course, a commensurate amount of praise, as well as some imitation.

Up to this date we have heard of practically no Italian lyrists but Petrarch and Metastasio, with rumors of Filicaia, Redi, Tansillo, and the Petrarchists noticed by Roscoe. Now came British editions and anthologies which fairly, and sometimes thoroughly, represented, besides these, practically every notable writer of lyric or short poems from Dante to Alfieri. In the matter of British editions Petrarch, of course, headed the list with one small and two large collections of his poetry: *Il Petrarca* (1796), edited by Polidori; *Rime scelte* (1801), edited by Mathias; and *Rime* (1809-10), edited by Boschini. The sonnets of Guarini, as well as various poems by Metastasio, were included in a Leeds edition of Tasso's *Aminta* (1796). Only a small collection of Lorenzo de' Medici's

poems having appeared, as you remember, in Roscoe's biography, Nardini and Buonaiuti took advantage of the awakened interest to issue a quarto edition of his *Poesie* (1801), accompanied by enough additional fifteenth-century poetry to justify *Risorgimento della poesia italiana dopo il Petrarca* as the title of a reissue. In 1804 Mathias edited Redi's *Bacco in Toscana*, and Romualdo Zotti, as a pendant to his edition of the *Divina commedia*, brought out a volume of ninety-one *Canzoni e sonetti* (1809), all said to be by Dante but many spurious. Most conspicuous among modern Italian poems to enjoy "Londra" editions (most of them published in Italy with, because of fear of the French and the prospect of British sales, falsified imprints) were Alfieri's *Misogallo* (three editions, 1799, 1799, and 1800) and *Rime* (two editions, 1804 and 1804 [in *Opere postume*, which also contained Alfieri's *Satire*]). The number of contemporary Italian poems published in London was swelled by the lucubrations of certain of the resident Italian teachers and theatre poets. Chief among these were Lorenzo da Ponte's *Saggi poetici* (1801); Gaetano Polidori's *Infedeltà punita* (1802), *Poesie varie* (about 1805), and *Coniadinio* (1807); and Filippo Pananti's *Poeta di teatro, romanzo poetico* (1808-9).

But it was not so much separate editions as anthologies which brought the elder Italian lyrists to English bosoms. Least important among these, the anonymously edited *Extracts from the Works of the Most Celebrated Italian Poets* (1798) contained only already well-known selections from Petrarch, Metastasio, Filicaia, and Lorenzo de' Medici, while G. B. Boschini's *Repertorio musicale* (1806) was composed of insignificant pieces intended to be set to music. The important anthologies were Nardini and Buonaiuti's *Saggi di prose e poesie* (1796-98), Giovanni Battista Cassano's *Fiore della poesia italiana del secolo XVIII* (1802), Mathias's *Componimenti lirici de' più illustri poeti d'Italia* (three volumes in 1802, and another three in 1808), and Antonio Montucci's *Italian Extracts* (1806). Taken together, these books put into English hands nearly all the most valuable sonnets, *canzoni*, and short poems in the Italian language. Nardini and Buonaiuti gave selections from, to name only a few, Dante (three *canzoni*, three sonnets, and a *ballata*), Cavalcanti (three sonnets and the

great *canzone*), Frederick II, Guinizelli, Brunetto Latini, Iacopo da Lentino, Pier della Vigna, Sennuccio del Bene, Petrarch (twenty-three sonnets and nine *canzoni*), Cino da Pistoia (five sonnets and four *canzoni*), Poliziano (*Stanze per la giostra di Giuliano de' Medici*), Burchiello, Giusto de' Conti, Lorenzo de' Medici (*Selve d'amore*, *La Nencia da Barberino*, and several songs and sonnets), Michelangelo, Berni, Sannazzaro, Della Casa, Vittoria Colonna, Gaspara Stampa, Veronica Gambara, Tansillo, Chiabrera, Lemene, Maggi, Marino, Menzini, Redi (*Bacco in Toscana*), Testi, Filicaia, Baldovini (*Il lamento di Cecco da Varlunga*), Frugoni, Guidi, Zappi, Passeroni, and Parini (*Il mattino*). Additional selections from most of these writers and many more came to light in the anthologies of Cassano, Mathias, and Montucci. Cassano, whose volumes were confined entirely to eighteenth-century poets, stressed—in addition to Metastasio, Frugoni, Filicaia, and Redi—Rolli, Bertola, Filomarino, Colpani, De Rossi, Monti, Pindemonte, and Alfieri. Montucci gave Alfieri, with twenty-three sonnets, the highest place among Italian sonneteers; none of the others, either "classic" or modern, did he honor with more than two or three examples, the total number of sonnets reproduced by him being sixty-five. Mathias's *Componimenti lirici* contained three hundred sonnets by Petrarch (96), Lorenzo de' Medici (14), Giusto de' Conti (10), Di Costanzo (10), Sannazzaro (8), Paterno (7), Tasso (7), Della Casa (5), Ariosto (4), and many others; one hundred and thirty-four *canzoni* by Petrarch (20), Guidi (18), Chiabrera (13), Menzini (9), Testi (8), Tasso (7), Filicaia (7), Frugoni (5), Dante (3), and others; and one hundred and fifteen *canzonette* by Metastasio (49), Menzini (23), Chiabrera (8), Savioli (7), Frugoni (4), Poliziano (3), and others. Two hundred and eleven of the sonnets here included were also published separately as *Sonetti de' più illustri poeti d'Italia* (1802). Mathias's chief aim in compiling his impressive *Componimenti* seems to have been, as we shall see, to popularize the Italian *canzone* or ode in England.<sup>41</sup> Another anthology, not printed but

<sup>41</sup> In this connection it should be noted that Polidori included at the end of his edition of Petrarch (*Il Petrarca*, 1796) three famous *canzoni* of Cavalcanti, Cino da Pistoia, and Dante—the last being a Dante item overlooked by Toynebee.

undoubtedly read in England, was Manfredi's excellent *Scelta di sonetti e canzoni de' più eccellenti rimatori d'ogni secolo*. By 1811 the treasury of Italian poetry was thoroughly broken open. Just what Englishmen carried off and made by translation their own we may pause for a minute to consider. To expect imitation and influence, except in regard to Petrarch, would be, at this early date, to expect too much.

Certain of the longer short poems of the Italians, notably Luigi Tansillo's *Balia*, Francesco Baldovini's *Lamento di Cecco da Varlunga*, and Poliziano's *Stanze per la giostra di Giuliano* (parts only), were now translated, the first by William Roscoe as *The Nurse* (1798), the second by John Hunter as *Cecco's Complaint* (1800), and the third by the Reverend William Parr Greswell in his *Memoirs of Angelus Politianus* and other poets of the Renaissance (Manchester, 1801; second edition, "greatly augmented," 1805). Roscoe translated *La Balia* not merely because it was a "work of one of the brightest wits in that constellation of Genius which appeared in Italy in the 16th century, and which yet diffuses a permanent light over the horizon of literature," but because it reënforced Rousseau's advice that mothers should nurse their own children. *The Nurse* is his most ambitious translation from the poetry he loved so well. In both moral faults and literary elegance he found sixteenth-century Italy and eighteenth-century England to agree so well that it was hardly necessary to alter the sense or style of his original. Let the English mother be eternally ashamed that when the "meek infant"

Scents the pure milk-drops as they slow distill,  
And thence anticipates the plenteous rill,  
From her first grasp the smiling babe she flings,  
Whilst pride and folly seal the gushing springs. . .

In contrast to the moral Roscoe, John Hunter seems to have translated *Il lamento di Cecco da Varlunga*, composed, like Lorenzo's *Nencia da Barberino*, in *lingua rusticale*, merely for fun. What he could—not much—he did to turn into racy English the lengthy lament of the lovelorn Tuscan farmer. His translation is chiefly notable, perhaps, for its adherence throughout forty stanzas to the rime scheme of his original, *ottava rima*, a poetic form which was

to be very popular with Byron, Keats, and Shelley. After Huggins' Ariosto, Hunter's *Cecco* constitutes, so far as I know, the most notable English use of this form in the years before 1811. The following stanza is typical of the translator's mild mastery of the octave rime. *Cecco* is describing the symptoms of his malady:

Now this I will not do, now that I will;  
 I cannot finish what I once begin:  
 I take the plough and like an oaf stand still,  
 I dig a ditch and tumble headlong in.  
 For thee, who 'rt pleas'd but when thou us't me ill,  
 My spirits fail me and my senses spin.  
 Sandra, for thee the live-long day I weep,  
 And when 'tis night, alas! I cannot sleep.

Greswell, for his part, translated Poliziano merely in order to give some striking instances of "an exuberant imagination, and a fancy by nature romantically poetical. . ." His *Memoirs* of Poliziano, Sannazzaro, Bembo, Fracastoro, Flaminio, and others was definitely intended as a pendant to Roscoe's *Lorenzo*, which, together with Clayton's translation of Tenhove's history of the Medici, he speaks of as having "recently served rather to stimulate than to allay the curiosity of the public" in that "interval comprehended between the dawn of learning . . . and the time when it attained its meridian splendour. . ." In as much as Greswell was chiefly concerned with those Renaissance Italians who wrote almost exclusively in Latin, we shall have little to say of him here. Such meager information about the lives and works of Italian-writing poets as his book contains is rather pompously retailed, nor are his translations distinguished. Like Hunter, he retains the *ottava rima* of his original in rendering twenty-four octaves from Poliziano's *Stanze per la giostra di Giuliano*. These present word pictures descriptive of the Kingdom of Love, the Rising of Venus, the Rape of Europa, and a Procession of Bacchus. As a sample of Greswell's rather frigid proficiency in this stanza, we may take a gorgeous description of flowers:

In show'rs descending, court<sup>42</sup> th' enamour'd air  
 The Violet's yellow, purple, snowy hues;

<sup>42</sup> For "courts."

Hyacinth! thy woes thy bosom's marks declare;  
 His form Narcissus in the stream yet views;  
 In snowy vest, but fring'd with purple glare,  
 Pale Clytie still the parting sun pursues;  
 Fresh o'er Adonis, Venus pours her woes;  
 Acanthus smiles; her lovers Crocus shows.

Greswell's other translations from the Italian include sonnets by Benedetto Menzini, Angelo Colocci, and Andrea Navagero, an elegy by Girolamo Fracastoro, an eclogue by Giovanni Battista Amalteo, and a *canzone* by Sannazzaro. The last of these will serve as a peg on which to hang a brief discussion of the Italian ode in England in these days. Though Mathias did his best to popularize the form, Greswell's version of Sannazzaro is practically the only English translation of a *canzone* to appear. In "Sperai gran tempo, e le mie dive il sanno" (included in Mathias's *Componimenti lirici*) Sannazzaro represents himself as anxious to quit love songs for a higher flight—the praise of his liberal-minded Aragonian patrons. Greswell probably translated this poem to prove that Italian poets can desert love for the theme of For-king-and-country. From Sannazzaro's long and rather complicated stanza form, typical of the Italian *canzone*, Greswell learned nothing. Eight stanzas riming a, b, b, c, a, b, b, c, c, d, d, e, f, e, f, he changed into double the number of stanzas like the following:

So he—PELIDES' ire who sings,  
 Brave AJAX, and ULYSSES sage,  
 Or who for thee his rapt lyre strings,  
 Troy's toilsome CHIEF!—thro' every age  
 Renown'd shall live, when time consigns  
 To dust the lover's nerveless lines,  
 Indignant: such the destiny he woos  
 Who prostitutes to LOVE the ingenuous Muse.

Even the Della Cruscans of Florence would hardly have treated the Petrarchan *canzone* to such a vapid paraphrase. Greswell's impercipientia is made the more unforgivable by the fact that Nardini (?) had lately expounded the architectural principles of this favorite Italian form in an article, "On the Ode Called by the Italians *Petrarchesca*," in the *Italian Magazine* (1796), while Mathias had

praised the relation of its architecture to its power of expressing all shades of elegiac or strident passion.<sup>43</sup> Nor did William Herbert, Dean of Manchester, show a much better sense of the capacities of the Italian *canzone* when he translated a part of Guidi's "O noi d'Arcadia fortunata gente" as "The Ruins of Rome."<sup>44</sup>

Though a growing admiration for Italian odes, especially those of Petrarch and Testi, is to be traced in John Pinkerton's *Letters of Literature* (1785) and Nathan Drake's *Literary Hours* (1798), we must, for a true sense of the worth of the Italian *canzoni* and their value as inspiration, fall back on the judgment of Mathias, who worked so hard to popularize them. "The poets of Italy," said he, "are, on the whole, inflamed with so divine a fury that I know not (if indeed it be not among the Greeks) where to find such an ardor of spirit, a lyric pattern and web so artfully interwoven, a strain so suave and sublime, with epithets so choice, inspiration so noble, apothegms so magnificent, flights so graceful, and thoughts so fresh and rare, as in their *canzoni*."<sup>45</sup> Englishmen will find, he said, that all Italian *canzoni*, either by their matter, their dignity, their elegance, their wholesomeness, their grace, their fine harmony, their tenderness, or their sublimity, transmit, "as if from living springs, a powerful splendor." Often he seemed to hear, "while reading the most tender or sublime *canzoni* of the most worthy successors of Dante and Petrarch," not only the voice of Pindar but of Ezekiel himself. Mathias was of the opinion that the Elizabethan days of English poetry could be made to prevail again only through imitation of these rapt bards. "Venerate therefore the host of poets of Florence, Ferrara, Sorrento, Savona, and Pavia, Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, Tasso, Chiabrera, Guidi. . ." In Chiabrera of Savona you can always find "that fervid fantasy and lively inspiration of which the Greeks were [formerly] the unique masters." Mathias's admiration of Chiabrera inspired Joseph Cooper Walker to add to his *Memoirs of Alessandro Tassoni*, men-

<sup>43</sup> In the editorial matter included in the first lot of *Componimenti lirici* (1802).

<sup>44</sup> *Translations from the German, Danish, Italian, etc.* (Part I, 1804).

<sup>45</sup> My translation from Mathias's *Lettera agli eruditi e culti inglesi* (1808). The following quotations, except those dealing with Chiabrera and Guidi, which occur in the biographical notices of the poets included in the *Componimenti* (Chiabrera, 1808; Guidi, 1802), come from the same source.



tioned above, a biographical sketch of the man who rescued "lyric poetry from the vile thralldom of Bacchus and Venus." As for Guidi of Pavia, Mathias could find no words capable of describing "the force, elegance, vivacity, and sublimity of that vast genius. . ." His enthusiasm even tempted him into a poem to the Pavese, ending:

Te fra dotti BRITANNI  
A novo chiamo e glorioso stato;  
Non contrasti tua voglia al grande invito.  
Splendan di novo sovra l'arpa aurata,  
Splendan su Pindo ancor tuoi nobil versi;  
Per te lampi e parole  
Ognor spargan le Muse;  
E d'Ippocrene e del TAMIGI ai lidi  
Per te s'ornin trofei, s'innalzin gridi!

Guidi, it will be remembered, signally seconded Chiabrera in turning the frequently venereal *canzone petrarchesca* into the more martial *canzone pindaresca*. Both thought to fill the sometimes listless Petrarchan ode with Greek fire by devoting it to the exalted treatment of exalted themes. On the architectural side Guidi sought to vary the uniform stanzas of the Petrarchan ode by giving them disparate verse and rime schemes,<sup>46</sup> while Chiabrera sometimes divided his poems, Greek fashion, into strophes, antistrophes, and epodes.<sup>47</sup>

The influence of the Italian on the English ode is a subject into which I cannot go in this book. Certain it is that the chief British practitioners of this form before the days we are studying—Dryden, John Hughes, and Gray—were all rather Italianate people. As to the great ode of these times, Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" (written, 1803-6), its form may be merely an elaboration of earlier English experiments in this genre. On the other hand, there is a distinct possibility that Wordsworth had some Italian examples in his eye. Certainly he was translating Michelangelo in these days, and

<sup>46</sup> What the Italians call a Pindaric ode may be, however, identical in form with the Petrarchan, the distinction depending on the subject matter.

<sup>47</sup> The first poet to introduce this division into Italian works seems to have been Luigi Alamanni.

probably reading Chiabrera. Many of the poems of Guidi, his most likely model, were accessible even in English editions. We may think of him, if we wish, as treading in Italian footsteps. It would also be possible, I think, to find traces of Italian influence in Coleridge's "Ode to the Departing Year," "France: an Ode," and "Dejection: an Ode," all composed between 1796 and 1802. It would be easier, however, did they fall within our study, to trace the influence of Italian *canzoni* in the odes of the later romantics.

That form of Italian lyric which made the most stir in England in these days, both in translation and in imitation, was, of course, the sonnet. Two or three songs and other pieces—an "Epithalamium" from Parini,<sup>48</sup> a "Brindisi" or toast from the same,<sup>49</sup> a "Hymn to Venus" from Metastasio,<sup>50</sup> and a "Balletto" from Marino<sup>51</sup>—were Englished by various hands, but in the realm of the sonnet we find translations from more than a hundred Italian poets. Though William Collier translated from Marino, Tasso, Preti, Maggi, Lemene, Orsi, Zappi, and others, the credit for swelling the number of Italians translated to such a size belongs entirely to a man the similarity of whose initials to his own caused Charles Lamb more than a little annoyance—Capel Lofft. A barrister, educated at Eton and Cambridge, Lofft was the author of several legal and political works as well as those translations which make him the most important figure at this point in our study. Between 1801 and 1808 he translated almost two hundred sonnets from rather more than one hundred Italian poets, including—besides Petrarch—Cino da Pistoia (5), Sannazzaro (5), Tasso (4), Dante (4), Zappi<sup>52</sup> (4), Michelangelo (3), Boiardo

<sup>48</sup> In William Herbert's *Translations from the German*, etc. (Part II, 1806).

<sup>49</sup> In anonymous *Poetry; Original and Selected* (about 1810).

<sup>50</sup> In John Cam Hobhouse's *Imitations and Translations from the Antient and Modern Classics* (1809). In all, there are four small translations from Metastasio, signed "E. B."

<sup>51</sup> In William Collier's *Poems on Various Occasions; with Translations* (1800). Exclusive of sonnets, Collier gives, in all, three short pieces from Marino.

<sup>52</sup> By this name I refer, as when I have used it on other occasions in this study, to Giovanni Battista Zappi. This poet's wife, Faustina Maratta, also wrote sonnets, of which Lofft translated two.

(3), Magno (3), Vittoria Colonna (3), Rota (3), Maggi (3), Guittone d'Arezzo (2), Lorenzo de' Medici (2), Ariosto (2), Tebaldeo (2), Della Casa (2), Marino (2), Alfieri (2), Guinizelli, Giusto de' Conti, Veronica Gambara, Gaspara Stampa, Testi, Frugoni, Filicaia, Chiabrera, Redi, and others too numerous to mention (1 or 2 each). These two hundred translated sonnets, accompanied by the Italian originals and interspersed with some six hundred English sonnets by Lofft and others, were published in five small volumes as *Laura; or, An Anthology of Sonnets (on the Petrarchan Model)* (1813-14). In a two-hundred-page preface to this work Lofft wrote lovingly, if awkwardly, of the origin of the sonnet, of the various forms it may take, and of the virtues of its precious practitioners from Guittone d'Arezzo to Alfieri—in describing whom he prayed from his reader "The indulgence allowed to the attempt of enumerating and classing the Stars. . ." Here he pointed out that the Italian sonnet, far from being a mere amorous *jeu d'esprit*, is capable of rendering all "the proper Subjects for which *speech* and *writing* exist. . ." It is, however, "most peculiarly applicable" to the "most generous Feelings of LOVE and FRIENDSHIP," the "noblest Points of Natural and of Moral PHILOSOPHY," the "most just and exalted Sentiments of PIETY," the "most ample and highest Views of *Patriotism* and universal PHILANTHROPY, of NATURE, of IDEAL BEAUTY, of the PERFECTION OF THE DIETY." For his affection toward, knowledge of, and labors for, the Italian sonnet Lofft deserves, indeed, to rank with Hoole, Boyd, Roscoe, Mathias, and those other vigorous popularizers of Italian literature who helped to build up the romantic interest in that subject. It was with the following sonnet of his own that he practically brought his great collection to a close:

HERE end, my MUSE, thy long, thy lov'd Career;  
 Here bound thy flight, who from the Italian Plains  
 Hast brought those gentle, pure, and polish'd Chains,  
 To the PHœbéan Choir for ever dear.  
 Those who for FREEDOM rais'd the generous Spear;  
 In whose blest Verse divine PARNASSUS reigns;  
 With heavenly BEAUTY who inspir'd their Strains;  
 Whom every VIRTUE loves, all ARTS revere,  
 Cherish the SONNET of harmonious Flow.

Here GUIDI, CINO, DANTE, ANGELO,  
 And the PETRARCHAN sweetest Graces shine;  
 The MEDICIAN, SANNAZARIAN Name,  
 The Wreath of TASSO, the VITTORIAN Fame;  
 Here the MILTONIAN PALM, and BRITISH HARP divine.

Of the translations which Lofft, Collier, and other Englishmen made from the Italian sonnet in these days, I have room for only a few examples. These had best be chosen from those Italian sonneteers who "for FREEDOM rais'd the generous Spear," or those "With heavenly BEAUTY who inspir'd their Strains," in as much as they probably lent more than one suggestion to the romantic poets to come. We have already seen how Michelangelo and Filicaia lamented the enslavement of Italy. Other poets who wept for her degradation, cursed her for her cowardly submission, or urged her to train for war and throw off her oppressors, included Tebaldeo, Chiabrera, Maggi, and Alfieri. Already Roscoe, in his biography of Leo X, had translated one of Tebaldeo's indignant outbursts against the cowardly submission of the Neapolitans to Charles VIII. Now Lofft did another, ending:

Eternal shame to the Italian Land,  
 When we must read, a People of such Force  
 Against the French not e'en a Month hath stood.  
 Yet, firm 'gainst Hannibal's tremendous Course,  
 Saguntum at her Gates brav'd his dire Brand,  
 And Death to her was sweet, rather than Faith subdued.

If cowardly submission to Charles VIII was, perhaps, the beginning of Italy's troubles, Alfieri detected the climax of them in her cowardly submission to that proud city of temples without religion—"ROME, the seat of every curse"—roundly denounced in a sonnet translated by Lofft. The subject of Italian independence we must not leave without noting that both Michelangelo and Filicaia now found new translators for their patriotic complaints. About 1806 Wordsworth translated the sad speech of the statue, "Night," twice over, one version running:

Grateful is Sleep; my life in stone bound fast  
 More grateful still: while wrong and shame shall last,  
 On me can Time no happier state bestow

Than to be left unconscious of the woe.  
Ah then, lest you awaken me, speak low.

And now Roscoe himself gave "Italia, Italia, o tu" what was, so far as I know, its first poetical English dress. I quote from the copy included in Lofft's anthology:

ITALIA, thou to whom in evil Hour  
The fatal Boon of Beauty Nature gave,  
Yet on thy Front the Sentence did engrave  
That ceaseless Woe should be thy only Dower!—  
Ah, were that Beauty less, or more thy Power!  
That he who now compels thee to his Arms  
Might gaze with cold Indifference on thy Charms,  
Or tremble at thine Eyes' indignant Lower!

Then shouldst thou not observe in glittering Line  
From the high Alps embattled Throngs descend,  
And Gallic Herds pollute thy Po's pure Wave;  
Nor, whilst encompass'd close by Spears not thine,  
Shouldst thou by foreign Hands thy Rights defend:  
Conquering or conquer'd, ever more a Slave.

As for religious sonnets, exhibiting Catholicism with a strong Platonic tinge, Collier<sup>53</sup> translated fine examples from Orsi, Zappi, and Lemene; Lofft, from Vittoria Colonna, Michelangelo, and others; Wordsworth<sup>54</sup> and Southey, from Michelangelo; and Anne Bannerman<sup>55</sup>, from Della Casa. Most of these sonnets are filled with learned lamentation on the vanity of human wishes and a falling back from the world, through beauty, upon God. Wordsworth and Southey made their translations at the request of Richard Dupper for inclusion in his biography of Michelangelo. Though opposed to the artist's "jargon of Platonism and crude metaphysical divinity," Dupper himself made slight prose and free-verse renderings from his poems.<sup>56</sup> Dupper's harsh view of Italian religious

<sup>53</sup> In *Poems on Various Occasions; with Translations* (1800).

<sup>54</sup> Three sonnets, translated in 1804 and 1806.

<sup>55</sup> In *Poems* (1800).

<sup>56</sup> Either Dupper or some friend also made a translation, keeping the original *ottava rima*, of nine stanzas in praise of country life—a work not usually included in the *Rime* of Michelangelo.

poetry was certainly not shared by Wordsworth and many other poets who were beginning once more to believe, with Lofft, that Platonism was just the thing to revive a stagnant "poetic Atmosphere" by giving poetry "a Charm like that of MUSIC; a calm, tender, refin'd, and high Delight. . ." Of these religious sonnets we may give two samples. The following is Lofft's version of a sonnet often attributed to Michelangelo but perhaps spurious:

By many Years brought nearly to my End,  
 Too late, O World, how vain thy Joys I know,  
 The Rest thou hast not, boasting to bestow,  
 And Comforts, dying in their Birth!—A Friend  
 Thou wert, didst thou but teach me to amend  
 My Errors by Experience.—'Tis not so:  
 Nor Shame, nor Sufferings teach aright to flow  
 The Current of my Will—I yet offend.

Mindless who grows mid sweet Illusions old,  
 When the wisht Fruit of his Desire arrives,  
 Destroys the Soul; the Body profits Nought.  
 This, only this, the Lapse of Years hath taught:  
 That happiest he who fewest Years survives  
 His Birth; while guiltless, gather'd to the Fold.

From the Platonic Marquis Orsi the Reverend William Collier translated a prescription for avoiding the sin and pain which Michelangelo (?) complains of:

Learn thou, my soul, by due degrees t' ascend  
 From mortal beauty to th' immortal fair;  
 Love to thy flight his fav'ring wings shall lend,  
 And Cynthia's beam her guiding light prepare:

Pass thro' three periods:—first, from matter rise,  
 From frail allurements to Truth's lasting charm,  
 Whose form unbodied to the mind supplies  
 Its heav'nly radiance, holy hearts to warm;

If, mounting still, thy wings unwearied soar  
 Where Time, his scythe resigning, reigns no more,  
 Then know thou treadest where archangels trod;  
 Thence to the One supreme pursue thy course,

And piercing onward through the bounded source  
Of matter, time, and number—gaze on God.

In this connection it should be noted that Wordsworth found a congenial fund of stark spiritual life in Chiabrera, from whom he translated nine epitaphs in 1810; and that Collier, from whom we have just been quoting, was not at all sure that Marino did not possess, in spite of his velvet robes, a genuine priestly spirit. As well as "Il tempio" and a "Balletto delle muse," both in praise of the spiritual life, he translated from Marino eleven sonnets, many of which were reprinted, along with two translations of his own, by Lofft. In none of the Italian poets would these men consent to find fault or blemish, and Marino, formerly allowed by even the warmest admirers of Italian literature to have been guilty of literary lapses gross enough to call, however unjustly, the beauty of all Italian poetry into question, was staunchly defended. Collier, his chief champion, could find in his lush figures of speech nothing more reprehensible than that fine excess of imagination which any but a frigid critic demands of poetry. With Lofft he was unboundedly devoted to a sonnet, "O del silenzio figlio e della notte," very popular in England just two hundred years before:

Thou gentle Son of Silence and of Night;  
Father of Fancy's bright ideal Train!  
SLEEP, by whose pathless Footsteps sliding light,  
Enamor'd Souls their Love's high Heaven obtain!

Now that, deep sunk beneath thy friendly Shade,  
All hearts but mine are in thy bands confin'd,  
Quit thy Cimmerian Grotts, too truly made  
The dark Resemblance of my gloomy Mind:

Come with thy calm Oblivion to my Aid,  
And with thee bring the Image of the Maid  
Whose Sight alone so lost a Wretch can save.  
But if that Form my Slumbers may not bless,  
Yet fly not Thou—that I may still possess  
At least the Image of that Death I crave.

In defense of his fondness for Marino, Collier quoted and adapted a Latin poem in which Milton calls him the darling of "the learned Muse"—"sweet-voic'd Marino," he who sang

The long-protracted loves of Syrian gods,  
And charm'd th' Ausonian virgins with his lays.

Of this bit of praise Collier made, to say the least, the most:

Go now, ye tribes of frigid critics! ye . . .  
Vain sons of Echo! whose repeated voice,  
Enfeebled, speaks not till it hears a sound;  
In silence sink; nor raise your envious scream,  
Like chatt'ring pies, at Jove's majestic bird,  
Or the soft murmur of th' Idalian dove. . .  
'Tis Milton's hand which on Marino's brow  
The laurel binds, and by deserved praise  
Stamps worth on others, and confirms his own.

As for Petrarch, he, of course, needed in these days no defending. He was, par excellence, the poet of stricken sensibility. In view of our recent mention of the subject, I may hasten to add that the newly budding Platonism of the time was not used in any way to weaken the validity of Laura's physical attractions or the poet's suffering; merely, as with many of the Elizabethan poets, to heighten them. In every quarter he was translated and imitated. John Penn, grandson of the famous William, inserted twenty-two sonnets, three *canzoni*, and three other pieces from Petrarch in his *Poems* (1801); Lofft translated twenty-eight sonnets and a *ballata* for inclusion in *Laura*; Lady Dacre Englished two important poems as *Le canzoni di Petrarca* (about 1805); while John Nott, the translator of Catullus, included seventy sonnets and ten *canzoni*—the largest number of poems yet rendered from Petrarch by one person—in *Petrarch Translated; in a Selection of His Sonnets and Odes* (1808). To Nott has been mistakenly ascribed, as we have seen, the anonymous Petrarch translation of 1777 (now republished, 1808). At his death in 1825 Nott had finished a complete translation of Petrarch's *canzoniere*, accompanied by a copious commentary. This unpublished work, acquired by Harvard University, seems to be the only scholarly thing of its kind in English. Translations of half a dozen or fewer sonnets occurred in Sir Brooke Boothby's *Sorrows, Sacred to Penelope* (1796), Anne Bannerman's *Poems* (1800), William Collier's *Poems on Various Occasions* (1800), and Thomas Clio Rickman's *Poetical Scraps* (1803); while in *Petrarca, a Selection of Sonnets from Various Authors* (1803) the editor, George Henderson, reprinted a num-



ber of translations by Penn and our old friend, Thomas Le Mesurier. In *Isabel* (1805) Thomas Walpole included a Latin version of part of a *canzone*, along with a translation from Petrarch's Sicilian imitator, Meli. Finally, Henry Boyd produced his *Triumphs of Petrarch* (1807), done in riming couplets—the soundest piece of translating, and not unlovely, which he ever did. Thus the whole story of Petrarch's passion for Laura was made accessible to English readers, including his prevision of "That awful day" when, in a realm purged of pain, his blessed eyes would enhance the blessed beauty of

that spotless and immortal mind,  
In a material mould once more enshrined.

In accordance with my custom I will give one sonnet from each of the three important translators of this period, Penn, Lofft, and Nott. From Penn, an extremely maladroit versifier, we may take as his most acceptable achievement the famous "Solo e pensoso i più deserti campi":

The loneliest fields, a pensive wanderer grown,  
I tread, with solitary steps and slow,  
And round my anxious eyes, inquiring, throw,  
The tracks of men to avoid, wherever shewn.  
No surer means are to invention known  
From looks too curious to conceal my woe,  
For in my secret breast what passions glow  
Each gesture tells, and what I still bemoan.  
Thus mountains now, methinks, and silent plains,  
Thus woods, thus rivers, learn that rueful state  
Which I from every living witness hide:  
Yet neither wild nor rugged path restrains  
Intrusive Love, that, sent by cruel Fate,  
Still walks, and still discourses, by my side.

From Capel Lofft's rather more expert renderings we may take the sonnet beginning, "S'una fede amorosa, un cor non finto":

If fond affection, if a truth more rare,  
A tender languor, a chastiz'd desire;  
If virtuous wishes, if the purest fire;  
If wanderings in a labyrinth of care;  
If every thought in every look to bear;

If when in broken accents they expire,  
 And now from fear and now through shame retire;  
 If the pale violet tint of love to wear;

To hold another than one's-self more dear;  
 To sigh, to cherish the continual tear;  
 To feed on woe, on pain'd remembrance pine;  
 When distant to be fire, and ice when near;—  
 If love be cause of feelings thus severe,  
 Thine, LADY, be the fault, the penance mine.

Nott, who was, in fact, a much poorer rimester than the anonymous translator of 1777 with whom he has been identified, never rose higher than the following version of "Gli occhi di ch'io parlai sì caldamente":

Those eyes, of which my song so warmly told;  
 Those arms, those hands, those feet, that face so fair,  
 Which mine own nature from myself did tear,  
 And make me seem as of peculiar mould;  
 Those crisped locks of pure refulgent gold;  
 The glow that angel smile was wont to wear,  
 Which made our earth a paradise appear,  
 Are turn'd to dust, insensible and cold.  
 Still life, O grief! O shame! in me prevails,  
 Though dimm'd those orbs which did such joy bestow  
 Erewhile life's bark was sped by prosperous gales.  
 Ah, now no more my am'rous strain shall flow;  
 The custom'd source of tuneful genius fails,  
 And my lyre utters only sounds of woe!

As for Petrarchan influence on the sonnets of this period, the subject is too large for detailed study, and the fruits would probably be only moderately sweet. The successors of Smith and Bowles were legion. A mild suggestion of the amount of sonnet-writing which took place after 1795 may be gathered from the names represented in anthologies of sonnets like George Henderson's *Petrarca* (1803) or Lofft's *Laura* (1813-14). Either wholly or to a considerable extent sonnets make up the contents of dozens of books like Sir Brooke Boothby's *Sorrows, Sacred to Penelope* (1796), Mrs. Mary Robinson's *Sappho and Phaon* (1796), Matilda Betham's *Elegies and . . . Smaller Poems* (1797), Mary

Stockdale's *Effusions of the Heart* (1798), Anna Seward's *Original Sonnets* (1799), William Dimond's *Petrarchal Sonnets* (1800), Alexander Thomson's *Sonnets, Odes, and Elegies* (1801), Mrs. Charles Matthews' *Poems* (1802), Helen Maria Williams' *Poems . . . and Original Sonnets* (1803), Thomas Clio Rickman's *Poetical Scraps* (1803), Peter Bayley's *Poems* (1803), Mrs. B. Finch's *Sonnets and Other Poems* (1805), Henry Kirke White's *Remains*, edited by Robert Southey (1807), Mary Johnson's *Original Sonnets* (1810), and so on. Though many of these sonnets deal with nature, politics, or great men, practically none of the volumes is free of unrequited love or mourning for the dead. Nor do these themes fail to be developed in a typically Petrarchan manner. In part these sonnets may be traced to the Elizabethan Petrarchists, the popularity of Surrey, Spenser, Drummond, and others being attested by Henderson's and Lofft's anthologies, but they are chiefly based on Petrarch himself. It is interesting to note that the sonnets least imitated by the poets of the Renaissance, those to Laura *in morte*, are here the favorites. That Petrarch was often in the sonneteers' minds is proved by innumerable references to him and Laura, and often by whole poems. Mrs. Mary Robinson wrote a sonnet called "Laura to Petrarch"<sup>57</sup>—

Then check thy wanderings, weary and forlorn,  
And find in Friendship's balm sick Passion's cure—

while the Swan of Lichfield indited one called "Petrarch to Vaucluse,"<sup>58</sup> beginning:

Fortunate vale! exulting hill, dear plain,  
Where morn and eve my Soul's fair Idol stray'd. . .

From a certain Mr. Crowe, probably William, author of *Lewesdon Hill*, Henderson obtained a hitherto unpublished sonnet on Petrarch for inclusion in his anthology. "To Petrarch," a kind of motto for the collection, describes an ambition often characteristic of, but by no means confined to, Henderson's sonneteers. "Studious of song" like the Italian, and "ah! too like/In sad complaints" of unrequited love and desolating death, dozens of contemporary poets shared Crowe's wish to blow

<sup>57</sup> *Poetical Works* (1806).

<sup>58</sup> *Original Sonnets* (1799).

that shell whose melancholy sound,  
 Heard in Valclusa, by the lucid stream  
 Of laurel-shaded Sorga, spread the theme,  
 Fair Laura and her scorn, to all around  
 High-built Avignon and the rocky mound  
 That banks the impetuous Rhone. . .<sup>59</sup>

In addition to these sonnets, we have in Mary Robinson's "Petrarch to Laura"<sup>60</sup> a fourteen-page poetical review, much resembling Preston's, of the history of the poet's passion. "Supposed to have been written during his retirement at Vacluse, a short time before his death," the poem represents Petrarch's entire life as having been embittered, not to say ruined, by a passion balked by cruelty and death. Strange and fearful indeed are the tumults with which the anti-Platonic Mrs. Robinson filled the poet's old age:

When the loud thunder fills the air,  
 And forests wither by the lightning's glare,  
 Madd'ning, I see thy glitt'ring phantom rise,  
 Spring from the steep, and hover 'midst the skies.  
 I rave, I shriek, from point to point I start,  
 While hell's worst torments riot in my heart. . .

Of the actual imitations of Petrarch, I take the liberty of reproducing three or four. Perished are most of these sad sonnets, begot by fashion and reared by meager talents. But as symptoms of emotional discontent they are interesting. They foretell the approach of that fever of melancholy which attained its highest temperature in Byron, Shelley, and Keats. They suggest that, whatever the specific germs which precipitated these famous maladies, the poetry of Petrarch, as reflected in English verse from 1795 to 1811, was a predisposing cause. Take the following sonnet of Sir Brooke Boothby—only an expert in Petrarch could be sure it was not wholly translated from the Italian:

Bright, crisped threads of pure, translucent gold!  
 Ye, who were wont with Zephyr's breath to play,  
 O'er the warm cheek and ivory forehead stray,  
 Or clasp her neck in many an amorous fold,  
 Now, motionless, this little shrine must hold:

<sup>59</sup> *Petrarca* (1803).

<sup>60</sup> *Poetical Works* (1806).

No more to wanton in the eye of day,  
 Or to the breeze your changeful hues display;  
 For ever still, inanimate, and cold!  
 Poor, poor last relic of an angel face!  
 Sad setting ray, no more thy orb is seen!  
 O Beauty's pattern, miracle of grace,  
 Must this be all that tells what thou hast been!  
 Come then, cold crystal, on this bosom lie  
 Till Love, and Grief, and fond Remembrance die!

Though Boothby's *Sorrows*, *Sacred to Penelope* seems, indeed, to have been inspired by the death of the baronet's daughter,<sup>81</sup> no definite cause can be assigned for the lyrical pangs of Anna Seward, Mary Stockdale, William Dimond, or so many others who contributed to swell the chorus of "Woe, ah woe!" Less abstract than usual was the anguish of Mrs. Mary Robinson, who in *Sappho and Phaon* sighed for the glance of no less real and wildly rolling an eye than that of the Prince of Wales. The following sonnet is an adaptation of "*S'una fede amorosa*," given above in *Lofft's translation*:

Is it to love, to fix the tender gaze,  
 To hide the timid blush, and steal away;  
 To shun the busy world, and waste the day  
 In some rude mountain's solitary maze?  
 Is it to chant one name in ceaseless lays;  
 To hear no words that other tongues can say;  
 To watch the pale moon's melancholy ray;  
 To chide in fondness, and in folly praise?  
 Is it to pour th' involuntary sigh,  
 To dream of bliss, and wake new pangs to prove;  
 To talk in fancy with the speaking eye,  
 Then start with jealousy and wildly rove;  
 Is it to loathe the light, and wish to die:  
 For these I feel,—and feel that they are love!

More typical of the bushels of sad sonnets is Thomas Clio Rickman's "On a Distant View of Windsor Castle":

<sup>81</sup> One of Reynolds' most famous pictures is that of Penelope Boothby at the age of four. On her tomb in Ashbourne Church, beautifully sculptured by Banks, were carved four lines from Petrarch, beginning, "Le cresse chiome d'or puro lucente."

Yes, o'er yon lofty woods thy loftier head  
 I see; but not as erst I us'd to see,  
 When thy first peep through all my system spread  
 Anticipated joy, and love, and extacy!

Ah! then thy flag proud wav'd o'er that dear seat,  
 Where lov'd MARIA liv'd... and she was mine!...  
 Where oft from far I hasten'd all to meet,  
 And hail'd thy lofty towers, and felt divine!

But she is dead! and I have wander'd wide;  
 Heard the winds whistle, and the surges roar;  
 Have rode tremendous on the threat'ning tide;  
 And many a trying scene have pass'd on shore.  
 All this have firmly met: but once again  
 Thy lofty towers to see awakes severest pain.

As the Elizabethans had been fond of inventing a cruel mistress for whom to weep, our writers invented a dead one. The conventionality of the usage is shown in sonnets like Mrs. Matthews' "To the Evening Star," in which a woman seems to mourn a lady sweetheart (perhaps, of course, a sister) dead:

Bright Star of Eve, resplendent gem of night,  
 Beneath thy lucid orb I love to stray,  
 Drop Feeling's tears, and mark thy quivering ray  
 Till, borne on Fancy's car with rapid flight,  
 I mount thy sphere, and tread thy beamy way;  
 Or if, perchance, I seek the ruin'd tower  
 To waste alone the contemplative hour,  
 Wrapt in deep thought, thy secrets I survey.

Methinks my angel MARY's form glides by,  
 And points to Thee, her seat of bliss serene;  
 Then bids me hope, nor grieve for joys terrene;  
 Waves her fair hand, and seeks her native sky.  
 Adieu, bright Star! the airy visions fade,  
 And leave me pensive in the ruin'd shade.

In defiance of Hannah More's story of the young girl<sup>62</sup> who, by translating Italian poetry and exchanging with a young man, "un-

<sup>62</sup> In *Cælebs in Search of a Wife* (1809).

der the names of Laura and Petrarch,' " a series of sonnets, fell " 'in the bosom of life . . . the melancholy victim of a mistaken education and an undisciplined mind,' " English poetesses were to continue to emulate Mrs. Charlotte Smith for many a sad season. English poets, for their part, were to persevere in their admiration of Petrarch till they achieved an expression of love-melancholy as musical and perhaps profounder than the Italian's own. In the days we are studying his was probably the most active of all Italian literary influences in England. His shaping power over the romantic melancholy of later poets was undoubtedly great. In sorrow of love and sorrow of death he was master of the sable ceremonies, and his influence united with that of Young, Gray, Macpherson, Rousseau, and others to make Englishmen plead:

O Melancholy, linger here awhile!  
O Music, Music, breathe despondingly.

### *Drama*

The field of Italian drama, like that of the lyric, was thoroughly opened up from 1795 to 1811. Satisfactory accounts of its origins and history were furnished by Joseph Cooper Walker, while British editions and translations of many of the chief dramatists appeared. Among the playwrights so honored were the as yet little-known figures of Goldoni, Alfieri, and Monti. Metastasio reached, perhaps, the apex of his British popularity.

Italian plays printed in Britain were headed by the pastoral dramas of the Renaissance. There were four editions of the *Aminia*, one published in Leeds (1796), one in Edinburgh (1796), and two in London (1800 and 1809). It is interesting to note that the Edinburgh edition, overseen by Tourner, contained Ongaro's piscatory drama, *Alceo*, while the Leeds edition was enlarged with Rinuccini's tragic pastoral, *Euridice*. This latter was a refinement of Poliziano's *Orfeo*, often called the first secular drama of Europe, itself reproduced in the fourth volume of Nardini and Buonaiuti's *Saggi di prose e poesie* (1797). Guarini's *Pastor fido* and Bonarelli della Rovere's *Filli di Sciro* enjoyed London editions in the same year (1800). Modern Italian drama was repre-

sented by plays by Goldoni, Metastasio, Alfieri, and others. Peretti's *Guida* (1798) contained Goldoni's *Pamela fanciulla*; Nardini's *Teatro italiano* (1800), reëdited by Zotti (1808), reproduced the Venetian lawyer's *Scozzese*, *Matrimonio per concorso*, and *Donna di maneggio*; while Montucci's *Italian Extracts* (1806) gave scenes from his *Bugiardo* and *Moliere*. Other modern comedies reproduced by Nardini in the *Teatro italiano* included Giovanni Gherardo de Rossi's *Cortigiano onesto*, Francesco Albergati Capacelli's *Ciarlator maldicente*, Camillo Federici's *Duca di Borgogna*, and Scipione Maffei's *Ceremonie*. The "Londra" edition of Alfieri's *Opere postume* (1804) contained two volumes of *Commedie*. Metastasio's *Isacco* was printed in Nardini and Buonaiuti's collection (Vol. I, 1796); similar pieces were edited by Polidori as *Cinque drammi sacri* (1801); scenes from several of his operas were given in the anonymous *Extracts* (1798) and in Montucci's *Italian Extracts* (1806); while Sastres's *Scelta delle opere* (1787) was reëdited by Nardini as *Opere scelte* (1806). Largely in imitation of Metastasio, Polidori, one of the most popular of the Italian teachers in London, brought out *Olimpia*, a tragi-comedy (1800), and a pair of *drammi sacri*, *Il figliuol prodigo* (1806) and *Il Nabucdonosorre* (1807). Polidori's tragedy, *Gernando*, published with his before-mentioned *Isabella* as *Due tragedie* (1798), leaned, like the earlier play, in the direction of Alfieri. In tragedy this latter poet was represented, it seems, by a London *Scelta di tragedie*, edited by Zotti about 1810. Zotti's selection was, however, surpassed in scope and elegance by Montucci's Edinburgh edition of *Quindici tragedie* (1806), to which were added the only other Italian tragedies "deserving that name": Maffei's *Merope* and Monti's *Aristodemo*. Also, Montucci included scenes from four of his plays in the *Italian Extracts* (1806). These important collections gave British currency to Alfieri's *Filippo*, *Antigone*, *Saul*, *Virginia*, *Mirra*, *Bruto primo*, *Bruto secondo*, *Sofonisba*, *Don Garzia*, and other tragedies. In addition, his autobiography, a personal and revolution-colored view of the birth of tragedy, was thrice printed in "Londra" (1804, 1804 [in *Opere postume*], and 1807).<sup>63</sup>

<sup>63</sup> It is interesting to note that a caricature of Alfieri's tragedies, *Socrate*, by Mollo, Saule, and Viani, was published in London in 1788 and republished with a London imprint in 1796.



Though the elder Dibdin, in summing up the history of the Italian theatre by way of preface to his *Complete History of the English Stage* (1800), condemned most Italian dramas, both tragedies and comedies of both past and present, as "indifferent," "licentious," or "miserable," Joseph Cooper Walker put an end to this extremely antiquated point of view in two extensive and sympathetic studies: a *Historical Memoir on Italian Tragedy, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (1799) and *An Historical and Critical Essay on the Revival of the Drama in Italy* (1805). Walker, a native of St. Valeri near Dublin, was, like so many of the apologists and popularizers of Italian literature, a Gael. A beneficiary of the Earl of Carlisle, a familiar of the Earl of Charlemont, a friend of Henry Boyd, and a befriender of John Black, he shares with these men and others whom he knew personally, such as Roscoe, Mathias, Tytler, Greswell, Burney, and Clayton, the honor of summoning "the swans of the Po and the Arno," as he put it, to Great Britain. Attacked by acute asthma, Walker, who was born about 1762, visited Italy in the late 1780's, where, heralded by his *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards* (1786), he was made a member of the Arcadian Academy of Rome<sup>64</sup> under the name of "Eubante Tirinzio." This trip confirmed him in his affection for a literature which he had first learned to admire in the Earl of Carlisle's translation of Dante's episode of Ugolino—"The powerful interest and exquisite beauties of the story, heightened by the excellence of the version, directed my attention to Dante,—and Dante led me on." From his return from Italy till his death in 1810 he devoted nearly all his time to elucidating the literary history of Italy, especially her drama. Though living the life of a recluse in the shadow of the mountains of Wicklow, Walker managed to amass a "hoard of Italian dramas," poems, and biographies, "my solace amidst the corrosive cares of life," in companionship with which "time passed me with an inaudible step." In Italian drama, and more especially tragedy, he discovered "a rich mine of intellectual wealth, hitherto almost totally unexplored by my

<sup>64</sup> The small decoration on the back of the present book is modified from the emblem of this academy as it appears on the title-page of Walker's *Historical Memoir on Italian Tragedy*.

countrymen," and "determined, however ill-qualified I might be, to endeavour to direct their notice to this literary treasure." The result was the pair of studies mentioned above.

In his *Essay on the Revival of the Drama in Italy* he devoted chapters to the sacred plays and moralities of the Middle Ages; to Mussato's Latin attempt at regular drama; to old dramatic pieces, like Boccaccio's *Ameto*, in the *lingua volgare*; to the *mascherate* invented by Lorenzo de' Medici; to the dawning of secular drama in Poliziano's *Orfeo*; to Bibbiena's *Calandra* and Ricchi's *Tre tiranni*; and to the rise of the *commedia dell'arte*. In the *Memoir on Italian Tragedy* he chronicled the lives and outlined the works of the chief tragic writers from Trissino to Monti, with special reference to Rucellai, Groto, Speroni, Giraldi Cinzio, Pietro Aretino, Dolce, Tasso, Torelli, Bracciolini, Chiabrera, Andreini, Testi, Dottori, Martelli, Gravina, Maffei, Lazzarini, Gasparo Gozzi, Bettinelli, Pindemonte, Pepoli, and Alfieri. It must also be noted that he added accounts of the lives and works of Rinuccini and Guarini to his *Memoirs of Alessandro Tassoni* (not published till 1815). On Walker's death Eyles Irwin read an elegy in his praise before the Royal Irish Academy, of which Walker had been one of the original members, in which he told how the invalid came to

Draw from Murano's shades the tragic Muse,  
Whose spell, tho' tempted by preferment's views,  
TRUSSINO's temper won the purple to refuse!—  
Or, to ALFIERI point, whose early page  
With horror's throes convuls'd the trembling stage;  
And he, whose strings yet yield a wilder tone,  
"By melancholy noted as her own."

This latter was, of course, Monti. Referring in part to Walker's fondness for Alfieri, Henry Boyd, in lines to his memory, averred

[That] many a Celtic, many a Tuscan strain,  
Shall float around thee in the realms of light,  
From those whose songs inspir'd the free-born train  
To brave the tyrant in the cause of right. . .

Adieu! adieu! my lov'd,—lamented Friend!  
No more we listen to the Tuscan shell!—

Minstrels of Arno!—from your shrines descend—  
—Ye green delights of *Valeri*,—farewell!<sup>65</sup>

Some of Walker's judgments of the Italian dramatists I shall refer to in the following account of translations from Goldoni, Metastasio, Alfieri, and Monti.

From an elder dramatist of Italy we may record a commendable translation, William Clapperton's *Pastor Fido . . . in English Blank Verse* (Edinburgh, 1809),<sup>66</sup> and hurry on to the eighteenth-century playwrights, some of whom now began to receive wide English recognition for the first time. Though Dibdin insisted as late as 1800 that the comedies of Goldoni are "the wildest rhapsodies that can be conceived," it had long been becoming clear to the British that his dramas contained a certain simplicity of plot—a kind of purity of arrangement, or evolution, of scenes, dependent on character—of which the English stage was in need. Not even the comedies of Goldsmith unrolled with the lifelikeness, naïve but inevitable, of those of the Venetian lawyer, while those of Sheridan were often so involved that they could be solved only by a *coup de théâtre*. Though Foote, Griffith, and others had imitated Goldoni, the first Englishman to make good use of his simplicity was, perhaps, Thomas Holcroft, whose comedies Allardyce Nicoll classes among "the most notable in the last years of the century." *Knave or Not?* (1798) is loosely based on Goldoni's *Padre di famiglia*, of which we have come across an English translation, with hints from his *Raggiratore* and *Serva amorosa*. Without intrigue or incidental excrescence an unscrupulously mercenary tutor is allowed, as in the Italian comedy, by natural friction with certain homely but honest characters, to work out his own discomfiture. Though Holcroft's villain is made more complex and colorful than Goldoni's, this play, along with many of its author's, breathes a hatred of hypocrisy and vice consonant with the Italian's. Other Holcroft comedies filled with the straightforward march of character-motivated incident are *Love's Frailties* (1794), *He's Much to Blame* (1798), *Hear Both Sides* (1803), and *The Vin-*

<sup>65</sup> Quoted, like the verses by Irwin, from Samuel Walker's preface to his brother's *Memoirs of Alessandro Tassoni* (1815).

<sup>66</sup> Mrs. Ware translated Amarilli's soliloquy, Act II, Scene 5, in *Poems* (1809).

*dictive Man* (1806). The course held by these plays, directly between what we may call comedy of humors and comedy of intrigue, is decidedly Goldonian. To the *Theatrical Recorder* (1805), edited by Holcroft, someone, possibly the editor himself, contributed an interesting translation of Goldoni's *Avaro fastoso*, first written in French as *L'Avare fastueux*. While lacking fire, this is a good example of Goldoni's method of arraigning folly. The period around 1805 is also notable for translations of two of the Venetian lawyer's best efforts, *La locandiera* and *Il matrimonio per concorso*. Both were made by a young Englishman, Gabriel Pinckerle, apparently on his travels, "with the help of his Master, Sir F. Mahait, at Trieste." The manuscripts of both *The She-Inn-Keeper* (1805) and *The Wedding by Concourse* (1806), neither of which has ever been published, were presented by Pinckerle's son, James, to the city of Venice on the occasion of the unveiling of a statue to Goldoni in 1883.<sup>67</sup> Joseph Cooper Walker, contrasting Goldoni's comedies with the superficial *commedie dell'arte* which they superseded, phrased the English end-of-the-century welcome to the Venetian when, in his *Essay on the Revival of Drama in Italy* (1805), he wrote: "It has been only in the eighteenth century that Nature has at last produced on the shore of the Adriatic gulf her son Goldoni, true and simple, but as negligent as herself."

In the days we are chronicling, Metastasio's popularity seems to have reached a climax. In *Conspiracy, a Tragedy* (Dublin, 1796) Robert Jephson, whose *Law of Lombardy* we have already tried to trace to its Italian sources, altered his *Clemenza di Tito*, formerly adapted by Cleland (1754) and translated by Hoole (1767); while in *Three Dramatic Pieces* (Dublin, 1797) Francis Olivari gave English renderings of *Il sogno di Scipione*, *Il natal di Giove*, and *Astrea placata*. In comparison with John Hoole's *Dramas and Other Poems of the Abbé Pietro Metastasio* (1800), these versions were, however, dwarfed into insignificance. In this three-volume work, illustrated by Stothard, Hoole ended a long and honorable career as, so to speak, official English translator from the Italian. To the six operas of 1767, here reprinted, he now added

<sup>67</sup> See Chatfield-Taylor's *Goldoni; a Biography* (1913).

all the others of importance, translating *Achille in Sciro*, *Adriano in Siria*, *Didone abbandonata*, *Ezio*, *Zenobia* (finished years before), *Temistocle*, *Siroe*, *Attilio Regolo*, and *Romolo ed Ersilia*; and throwing in, for good measure, versions of the idyllic *Isola disabitata* (made in 1766), the allegorical *Sogno di Scipione*, the sacred *Giuseppe riconosciuto*, and a dozen of the better-known "cantatas" in honor of Nice and other "nymphs." In the preface to this work Hoole dropped his old custom of referring to Metastasio's operas as "tragedies," and even seems to have feared that someone might reproach him for spending the last years of his life in frivolous activity! Indeed, he felt it necessary to beg his readers to give him gratitude for "rational amusement," and freedom to enjoy with a clear conscience "the recollection of the years passed in that LIBERAL SERVICE from which I have derived so many comforts to glad the evening of life."

It is certain that Hoole was discouraged from calling Metastasio a tragic writer by the authoritative voices of William Mason, Dr. Charles Burney, and Walker. Though Stefano Arteaga, whose *Rivoluzioni del teatro musicale* (1783-88) was published in London in the French translation of the Baron de Rouvron (1802), continued to argue that Metastasio had seized upon the very soul of the Greek tragic poets, Englishmen had recently expressed doubts about his right to be called the Italian Sophocles. In *Essays, Historical and Critical, on English Church Music* (1795) Mason drew such a clear distinction between opera and tragedy that he could no longer find in Metastasio's dramas anything more than mere sketches or suggestions for tragedies.<sup>68</sup> In recompense for depriving the Italian of the tragic laurels granted him throughout most of the eighteenth century, Mason admitted, of course, that "his lyrical dramas, as originally written, with respect to theatric contrivance and judicious development of the story, infinitely excel the generality of our modern tragedies." In his three-volume *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Abate Metastasio* (1796) Dr. Burney carried Mason's distinction between operas and tragedies so far as to admit that "A good opera, without many changes, will always be a bad tragedy. . ." On the other hand, he did not feel it necessary to lament with Walker (*His-*

<sup>68</sup> Mason's friend, Gray, had long ago made this point.

*torical Memoir on Italian Tragedy*, 1799) that a genius capable of composing the majestic *Didone abbandonata* should have been "wasted upon mere lyric compositions; and that the powers of such a mind should have been shackled by the trammels of music." Burney found in many of his mere operas, "even through the effeminate languor of lengthened tones," "a true tragic spirit," a high morality, and a *ne plus ultra* of beauty. He feared that, written as regular tragedies, they might never have been heard of in England! For him the popularity of his hero's dramas was sufficient proof of their greatness—"his works are still in every hand: the philosopher, the courtier, the bigot, the man of the world, austere and gallant females, all equally read them, and all find them equally beautiful. His moral maxims are daily cited, and his productions are become the code of lovers." Burney never tired of praising the morality of Metastasio's life and works. From the Italian's correspondence he translated almost four hundred letters, each breathing, in fact, a spirit of mild, if worldly, benevolence. In his long eulogy, "To the Shade of Metastasio," he dwelt almost exclusively on the moralizing influence of his poetry:

If still allow'd to listen, honour'd shade!  
And mortal sorrows reach the happy dead,  
Oh! hear with sensibility my strain,  
Nor humble tears, nor heart-felt grief disdain! . . .  
The friend of virtue in a gay disguise,  
Which captivates alike the weak and wise;  
The dissolute and lawless, patient, hear  
Thy tale of woe, and drop a pitying tear. . . .  
Long may thy precepts regulate the heart,  
And joy seraphic to mankind impart!  
Long may thy dulcet measures Music guide,  
And taste and feeling over art preside!  
While intellectual radiance beams around,  
And to the heart points each impassion'd sound!

At such enthusiasm it were cold-blooded to do less than exclaim with Walker in the precious phraseology of the day: "Divine bard! if thy meek spirit still hovereth over this sublunary sphere, extend thy guardian care to the accomplished Briton who has lately raised a monument of elegant structure to thy name!"

Though the English fame of Metastasio was soon to begin to wane, that of Alfieri, who now first came into prominence, was throughout the first half of the nineteenth century to grow. Alfieri, both in his language and themes, not to mention his dramatic architecture, was in direct revolt against Metastasio. In contrast to Metastasian opera he sought to establish in Italy a real tragic drama. Since Metastasio found his favorite reading in Marino and Guarini, Alfieri turned to Dante; since the court poet of Vienna revelled in the themes of young love and regal ambition, the title-hating count turned to domestic affection (or incest) and the patriotic will to free one's country; since the librettist stuffed his plays with swift-moving incident, the would-be tragedian pared his story to the quick. What was, perhaps, the first notable English account of Alfieri occurred in Walker's *Historical Memoir on Italian Tragedy*, where the author hailed him as the foremost of modern tragic bards and gave précis of his chief plays, illustrated from time to time with quotations which he himself translated. Walker's judgment of Alfieri was not, however, wholly favorable. As for the poet's subject matter, he allowed him to have studied "the book of nature . . . with uncommon success. He seems to have explored, with the inquisitive eye of genius, all the recesses of the human mind, and to have noted with anxious care the working of the passions in all their various modifications." But Walker could not help regretting that his dramatic treatment of his subjects was often loose, dull, and weak in dramatic illusion, while his diction was not seldom "harsh, inelegant, and sometimes ungrammatical." These objections, picked up from Italian critics, he almost obviated, however, when he added that "his dramas, with all their faults, seldom fail to produce the intended effect," and "in his 'hoarse rough verse' we often hear a mighty voice, at whose pealing sound vice stands appalled." Walker was shocked, of course, that in his *Congiura de' Pazzi* Alfieri should have tried to give Roscoe's Lorenzo dissimulated designs upon the liberty of his country! His favorite tragedies seem to have been *Agamennone*, *Mirra*, and *Virginia*, which latter would "seem to have been written amidst the ruins of the Capitol." In the republican tragedies, headed by *Bruto primo*, which was dedicated to General Washington, he was afraid that "we fre-

quently lose the dramatic poet in the declamatory champion of liberty." While admitting that *Don Garzia* "exceeds in accumulated horrors the productions of Schiller," he thought that in *Filippo* Alfieri carried the monstrous villainy of the Spanish tyrant beyond all bounds—"he ceases to be true either to history or to nature when he makes Philip insist on the suicide of his son in his own presence."

It was, nevertheless, this latter play which first found English translators. The unrelieved cruelty of "the Tiberius of Spain," however unnatural, simply drowns the reader in tragic "pity and fear." It offers, moreover, a chance for that kind of arraignment of tyranny which inspired Alfieri to his best efforts. Into young Carlo, the Don Carlos of history, forcefully deprived of his promised bride by a father's lust and persecuted for his love of popular liberty, Alfieri manages to pour a fund of undaunted courage; while he makes the tyrant's child bride, Isabella, pathetically frank in her incestuous love. Hatred and jealousy of his son's power to win affection drive Filippo to trick the unsuspecting pair into a situation from which he allows Carlo to find release only in instant suicide. Though he seeks to keep Isabella in life, as more grievous to her than death, she eludes this last torture by seizing his knife. Not that this catastrophe more than grazes the conscience of this cream of villains:

See what a stream  
Of blood runs there—and oh! what blood!—at last  
I have obtained a full and dreadful vengeance;—  
But am I happier for it?<sup>69</sup>

This play was translated as *Philip the Second* by Fanny Holcroft in the *Theatrical Recorder* (1805), and by Lionel Thomas Berguer as *Philip, King of Spain* (1809).

The conventional strictures upon Alfieri's lack of incident, metaphor, and mellifluous speech seem to have been successfully combated by Antonio Montucci in the preface to his Edinburgh edition of *Quindici Tragedie* (1806), where he attempted to prove that "the style of Alfieri, as improved by himself, is the only

<sup>69</sup> Berguer's translation.



one in which real Italian tragedies could possibly be written without imitating the *sing-song* lines of our serious operas." Like Alfieri himself, he argued for a more liberal interpretation of the meaning of harmony, and insisted that "If the Italian classics, prior to Alfieri, afforded some faint light to frame a tragic style, surely the robust, concise, and impressive lines of the *Divina commedia di Dante* were the only ones worthy the imitation of a judicious tragic poet. . ."<sup>10</sup> Additional light on how this badly educated Italian nobleman slowly learned to love and follow Dante<sup>11</sup> was shed by an anonymous translation of his *Vita as Memoirs of Count Vittorio Alfieri, Written by Himself* (1810). This work also made clear the fact that Alfieri's love of liberty, far from being a literary attitude, was the very life-breath of "a resolute, obstinate, and ungovernable character, susceptible of the warmest affections, among which, by an odd kind of combination, predominated the most ardent love, and a hatred approaching to madness against every species of tyranny. . . ." The extent to which both his plays and his autobiography contributed to interest Englishmen in Italian liberation cannot be overemphasized. If Patini had suggested that modern Italians can love republican hardihood as ardently as any of their forefathers, Alfieri, by every word and deed of his intense life, proved it. Nor was his stark, forceful ideal of tragedy to lack English admirers and imitators among the high romantics, headed by Byron. Even in the days under consideration we shall find Landor tracking the Italian's footsteps. Meantime, we leave him with Lofft's sonnet (written, 1808) in praise of his tragedies:

O HAIL, ALFIERI!—To thy Tragic Tone  
 The GRECIAN BARDS, a Band sublime, appear,  
 And with a pleas'd and deep Attention hear  
 A Voice, a Spirit, ah, how like their own!  
 Far was that Spirit from our Regions flown;  
 But DANTE'S<sup>12</sup> self, the awful, the severe,  
 Bends to thine Accents the approving Ear;  
 Nor SHAKESPEARE breathes his Energies alone.

<sup>10</sup> Not in Toynbee.

<sup>11</sup> Not in Toynbee.

<sup>12</sup> Not in Toynbee.

Light-rob'd SIMPLICITY, and keen-ey'd ART,  
 And high-soul'd GENIUS in thy Labours join,  
 And philosophic VIRTUE, calm and free;  
 PITY and AWE fill the expanding Heart,  
 Exalt, and purify!—such WORKS divine  
 Merit the glorious name of TRAGEDY!

With a brief mention of the man whom Walker called "a powerful rival of the feeling and prolific Alfieri" we may bring this section of our account of the Italian theatre in England to a close. In his *Aristodemo* Vincenzo Monti, author of the Dantesque *Bassvilliana*, was held by Walker, who seems to have introduced him to England, to have written a play better calculated than any other "modern tragedy . . . to stand the ordeal of Aristotle. . ." In order to gain power Aristodemo, who longed to be king of Messenia, offered the life of his virgin daughter, Dirce, to relieve, in accord with the demands of the oracle of Delphi, a plague. When her mother and lover sought to prevent this catastrophe by pretending that Dirce was secretly married and pregnant, the enraged father destroyed her. Since she was really a virgin, this crime served at once to advance Aristodemo to power and drive him, raging with remorse, to suicide. Both Henry Boyd and J. A. Favalli translated this piece, the former before 1799, the latter in 1809. A selection from Boyd's work, which was never published,<sup>78</sup> is given in Walker. In a dream the ghost of Dirce returns, "Her matted ringlets hung with dust and blood," to haunt her now royal father:

Then on a sudden starting up, it drew  
 From its pale features the dishevell'd hair,  
 That rain'd on me a bloody shower. But not  
 Content with this, it threw its funeral vest  
 Aside, in wide display, and shew'd the deed  
 Of this disastrous hand. I strove to close  
 The horrid scene, and drew the flowing vest  
 Together close. With frantic haste, she rent  
 Again the bloody veil away; then clasp'd

<sup>78</sup> He seems to have translated, as well, Monti's *Galeotto Manfredi*, a historical tragedy based on a husband-murder committed in Faenza in the days of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and described by Roscoe.

My bosom to her bosom with main force.  
 Methought I felt her agonizing heart,  
 And her torn bowels, underneath my hand,  
 Yet palpitating with remains of life. . .

Favalli averred that Aristodemo shows "in his remorse an elevation of character and deportment similar to that which is so highly admired in the English drama." In Favalli's prose *Aristodemo* the broken monarch dies muttering:

What would my child?—I know I have murdered her; but have I not severely wept the deed? . . . Look how her hair stands like bristled horns!—Why are those eyes so hollow?—say, who plucked them out—some ravenous kite?—Why flows that infectious blood?—Cover, or cover over the rest. . . Tear yonder blood-stained crown to atoms, . . . bestrew the thrones of kings with its remains. . .

In this tragedy, said Favalli, Monti exhibits the strength of the Italian language in such a way as to prove that, "besides characteristic harmony, it is adapted to convey the most sombrous and terrific ideas, as well as the most sublime."

Favalli was of the opinion that only political liberty was necessary to make the Italian theatre the equal of any in the world—"Endow the inhabitants of that delightful country with an English Constitution, and natural genius will flourish as in the unrivalled period of Roman excellence." Judging from the works of Alfieri and Monti, Walker himself had found it not improbable that "Italy, ere many years roll away, will surpass the rest of Europe in the dramatic, as well as in the other arts."

### Novelle

Of the Italian *novelle*, which had once been, and were again to become, a stirring force in English letters, I have not much to report at this time. English editions were not, indeed, so frequent as at some periods before 1795. From Leghorn Gaetano Domenico Poggiali sent the last three items of that series of "Londra" editions in which he seems to have designed to include all the principal Italian *novellieri*: Parabosco's *Diporti* (1795), Sacchetti's *Novelle* (1795), and Giustiniano Nelli's *Amorose novelle* (1798). What

may have been a genuine British edition of Domenico Batacchi's *Novelle galanti* appeared in "Londra" in 1800. A selection of Boccaccio's stories, together with Ser Giovanni Fiorentino's "Mercante di Venezia" and the anonymous but always popular "Grasso legnaiuolo," was edited by Bandiera and Nardini (1802). Both of the tales just named, together with others by Fiorentino, Sacchetti, Boccaccio, Arienti, Corio, Masuccio Salernitano, Bandello, Firenzuola, Giraldis Cinzio, Grazzini, Da Porto, and Sansovino—often chosen because of their relation to Elizabethan drama—appeared in Nardini and Buonaiuti's compendious *Saggi di prose e prosie*, so often mentioned in these latter pages. Both Peretti's *Guida* (1798) and Montucci's *Italian Extracts* (1806) contained a dozen or so *novelle* from Boccaccio and Sacchetti, usually of that order known as *motti* or *facezie*, that is, humorous anecdotes with or without a moral intention. In 1798 a whole collection of these, made in Latin by Poggio Bracciolini, was edited by F. J. M. Noël as *Facetiarum Libellus Unicus* and published with a London imprint.<sup>74</sup> Eighteenth-century Italian tales, nearly always patently didactic, after the fashion of children's stories, were represented by Turner's Edinburgh edition of Giovanni Francesco Soave's *Novelle morali* (1795) and by Nardini's *Novelle scelte degli autori più celebri* (1802). Besides five stories from Soave himself, this collection included two by Albergati Capacelli, two by Padovani, three by Altanesi, three by Lodoli, and thirty-six by Carlo Gozzi. These tales are often comparable to those in the *Spectator*, from which not a few of them are taken. Some are based on fable, some on history, and others on contemporary events, all having a palpable design on the reader. Typical stories by Soave, the foremost of these moralists, are "Riccardo Macwill," "Damone e Pitia," "Etelredo," "Uggero il Danese," "Guglielmo Tell," and "Guglielmo Penn"—"L'ingratitude" tells of the deceits practised by Inkle on "Iariko." Gaetano Polidori's *Saggio di novelle e favole* (1798)<sup>75</sup> would seem to indicate a kind of generic connection between these prose tales and those verse fables, modelled on La

<sup>74</sup> The two small volumes bear the imprint, "Mileti," as well as "Londini."

<sup>75</sup> A third edition of Polidori's *Novelle morali* appeared in 1804.

Fontaine, of which eighteenth-century Italians were so fond. Since these, usually nothing but Æsop versified, were intended to serve exactly the same ends as the didactic *novelle*, they may fairly be noticed here. Almost without exception these fables chronicle the eminently instructive doings of the animals, flowers, or planets. Some idea of their popularity in Italy may be gained from the fact that Nardini's London edition of *Favole scelte degli autori più celebri* (1800) included pieces from Crudeli (3), Pignotti (13), Passeroni (17), Roberti (22), Grillo (26), De Rossi (27), Bertola (52), and other well-known poets of the eighteenth century. A separate "Londra" edition of Luigi Grillo's *Favole esopiane* appeared in 1800.

As for translations, adaptations, versifications, and dramatizations of the *novelle*, I have come across the following. Wolstenholme Parr translated a famous *novella* from Giraldis Cinzio as *The Story of the Moor of Venice* (1795); P. R. Rota rendered Soave's *Novelle* as *Moral Tales* (1802); while Edward Dubois revised Dr. Charles Balguy's 1741 translation of Boccaccio's *Decamerone* (1804), prefacing it with "Remarks on the Life and Writings of Boccaccio," taken from Villani, Tiraboschi, Martinelli, Bayle, Thomas Warton, Tyrwhitt, and Roscoe. Giuseppe A. Graglia, active as an Italian teacher since the 1770's, expanded certain of the more famous of the Renaissance *novelle* into small English novels. Thus his *Castle of Eridan* (1800) was merely a very elegantly refined and ornamented version of Bandello II, 44, the tale of Don Giovanni di Mendoza and the Duchess of Savoy, so well known to Elizabethan readers and already used in the days we have been studying in Robert Jephson's *Law of Lombardy*; while his *Labyrinth of Corcira* (1804) probably came from a similar source. According to Graglia, there were "a great variety of productions of this kind" before the public in 1800. These may be thought of, perhaps, as furnishing romantic dramatists with just such paraphrases of the famous *novelle* as Painter and Fenton set before Elizabethan playwrights in the form of translations from Belleforest. Poetic paraphrases of two *novelle* also deserve to be noticed, especially since they prelude those of Keats, Procter, Reynolds, and others. These are Eliza Sotheby's *Patient Griselda* (1798) and John Cam Hob-

house's "Miracle" (in *Imitations and Translations*, 1809<sup>78</sup>), both from Boccaccio (X, 10 and III, 1). The first is done in five-, the second in four-stress, couplets. Sotheby's rehearsal of the woes of Griselda is, of course, more interesting to students of the Italian *novelle* in English literature than Hobhouse's tasteless attempt to make the tale of Masetto da Lamporecchio prove that "the female world are whores throughout." Miss Sotheby's prim old-fashioned verses show, here and there, just a touch of liveliness. Some of the concluding lines are inventions, as where the poetess exclaims:

Yet she has reap'd her due reward of fame,  
Whose deathless rolls record her *patient* name;  
To her, the Gallic bard his harp has strung,  
Her praise has flow'd from polish'd Boccace' tongue,  
And Britain's isle has wept Griselda's wrong,  
By Chaucer chronicled in ancient song.

Whether *Patient Griselda*; or, *The Mysterious King of Lombardy*, a pantomime acted at Sadlers Wells in 1799, was inspired by Miss Sotheby's verses, I cannot tell. Like the plays produced around 1780, it is symptomatic of the English theatre's return to the *novelle* for ideas and inspiration. John C. Cross's *Louisa of Lombardy*; or, *The Secret Nuptials*, a "Serious Spectacle" performed at the New Royal Circus in 1803, is indebted to Italian stories in so far as it is founded on Jephson's *Law of Lombardy*. Though keeping many of the details of the play, Cross, by secretly marrying Paladore to the princess and providing them with a child, gave Bireno some grounds for invoking the Law of Lombardy against an apparently adulterous woman. The intensely popular nature of these spectacles gives an idea of the degree to which the English theatre was returning to the loves of its youth.

Criticism and biography of the *novellieri* were rare. It must be mentioned, however, that Godwin's *Life of Geoffrey Chaucer* (1803) contained a charming account of Boccaccio, in which his simplicity, skill, and spirit in depicting human emotions were duly commended. In the preface to his revision of Balguy's *Decameron* Edward Dubois, with the help of Warton, reviewed the Eliza-

<sup>78</sup> "The Miracle" is dated "Trin. Coll. Camb. 1805."

bethan debt to Boccaccio, and insisted that "we may affirm of him what Dr. Johnson has well observed of Homer, 'That nation after nation, and century after century, has been able to do little more than *transpose his incidents, new name his characters, and paraphrase his sentiments.*'" Though the Reverend William Shepherd did not go so far as to claim that no new jokes had been made since Poggio Bracciolini published his *Facetiarum Liber* about the middle of the fifteenth century, he gave these stories, certain dull or licentious ones excepted, high praise in his biography of the Florentine historian. In spite of the fact that his *Life of Poggio Bracciolini* (1802) is, after Roscoe's *Lorenzo*, by which it was inspired, one of the most impressive English studies of the revival of learning, I have not been able to introduce it before this point, nor have I much to say of it now. Only by the way was Poggio, collector of manuscripts, Apostolic Secretary, and Chancellor of the Florentine Republic, a *novelliere*. Shepherd more than succumbed to the very "elegant" style of his times when he rejoiced, referring to the author of the *Facetiarum Liber*, that "in a world of anxiety and trouble, he who is endued with the happy talent of causing the wrinkle of care to give place to the pleasing convulsion of mirth will find few circles of society in which he is not a welcome guest."

In spite of the unimpressive dimensions of my report on the *novelle* in England before 1811, I hope it has become clear that there was a steadily growing interest in the subject. Not only in the days of the high romantics but before the end of this study, as we shall see, did this rising sap cause the tree of English poetry to put forth leaves.

By 1811, then, as must be abundantly apparent, the ignorance of Italy which we encountered in Edward Clarke had been replaced by a generous knowledge of, and sympathetic interest in, all phases of that subject. It must also be apparent that much of the credit for the rapid progress made toward this goal between 1795 and 1811 must go to the Liverpool lawyer. Roscoe's famous biographies made it positively fashionable for literary amateurs to focus their descriptive powers on some phase of Italian history, literature, or art. While he was in one sense the product of those

accumulated forces whose growth we have been tracing since the days when Baretti landed in England, there is no doubt that he drew those centrifugal forces to a point, infused them with fresh vigor, and drove them forth again through channels which utilized to the utmost their fructifying power. To a certain extent Mathias, Noble, Walker, Greswell, Shepherd, Lofft, Black, and nearly all the other writers we have been studying in this chapter were inspired by him. So led, these men set themselves, shoulder to shoulder, to a well-conceived task: that, to wit, of improving and enriching English literature by making Englishmen what we should call, in a modern phrase, "Italy-conscious." Nor did they fail. By 1811 literate Englishmen everywhere seem to have at least seen the star in the south, many were discussing the portent with animation, while some few had already begun to follow it. In his *Tour through Italy* Eustace recorded the passing of that barren age of anti-Italian sentiment when, "though the language of Italy was known, its literature was neglected; so that not its historians only were forgotten, but of all the treasures of its divine poesy little was ever cited or admired excepting a few airs from the opera, or some love-sick and effeminate sonnets selected from the minor poets." According to Eustace, all attempts "to revive the taste that had formed the *princes of English verse*, and given them that boldness and that sublimity which foreigners now consider as their characteristic qualities," made but little headway

until the publication of the *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici*, a work which evidently awakened the slumbering curiosity of the nation, and once more turned their eyes to *Italy*, the great parent and nurse of languages, of laws, of arts, and of sciences. Since the appearance of that publication, many champions have arisen to support the united cause of Taste and of Italian, and have displayed talents which might have attained success with fewer advantages on their side, but, with so many, could not fail to triumph. Among these the public is much indebted to Mr. Mathias, . . . who [has] struggled with unabating zeal to turn the attention of the public from the frippery and the *tinsel* of France to the sterling ore of Italy, and to place the literature of that country in the rank due to its merit, that is, next to the emanations of Greek and Roman genius.



Capel Lofft could never sufficiently commend the successful pro-Italian "exertions and example of . . . a ROSCOE, and a MATHIAS," while John Black envied "the biographer of Lorenzo de' Medici, . . . to whose labours, perhaps, it will have been chiefly owing, if ever the Italian muses shall resume their former dignity in this island." Reviewing Black's *Life of Torquato Tasso* in the *Edinburgh Review* for August, 1810, a certain Dr. Irving wrote:

The literary history of Italy, which, at a very recent period, was almost entirely neglected in this island, has now become an object of general curiosity. The attention of the public was first attracted in this direction by the very ingenious Mr. Roscoe, an author who to a sound and cultivated understanding unites a correct and elegant taste. The splendid exertions of this literary historian have been ably seconded by his friend, Mr. Shepherd, who has been followed in the same track by Mr. Greswell and Mr. Walker.

Expressions like these, were it necessary, I could duplicate a dozen times over. England, by 1811, was "Italy-conscious."

By 1811 what we have chosen to call the romantic interest in Italy had originated, developed, and become, not only with respect to literature, but to character, politics, history, art, and scenery, a full-fledged reality. Without scanting the task set ourselves in this book, we could at this point bring our study to a close. Since, however, a widespread use of the Italianate information, sympathies, and enthusiasms now at the disposal of English writers could hardly be made till after the fall of Napoleon, I have considered this fact sufficient excuse for glancing at the years from 1811 to 1815, inclusive. In them are to be garnered the first fruits, however green, of our study. In them are to be encountered names like Byron, Landor, and Hunt. In them Italian literature, history, and to a certain extent politics, if not—for there was still no travel—Italian scenery and art, became once more definitely active in shaping the destinies of English literature.

VII  
THE ROMANTIC SHIP PREPARES TO SAIL  
1811-1815



PART VII  
THE ROMANTIC SHIP PREPARE TO SAIL  
1811-1815

My only aim in this brief concluding chapter is to show how the romantic interest in Italy, whose origins we have been tracing, now began to buoy up really important English poems and plays. Formerly we have been too busy watching the tide of interest rise to give much thought to what a gaily colored and precious freight it was destined to bear. Here we may pause just long enough to break a bottle of champagne and watch the vessel take the water with a bound.

LEIGH HUNT, JOHN HERMAN MERIVALE, HENRY HART MILMAN,  
AND OTHERS: THE FIRST NOTABLE ADAPTATIONS AND  
IMITATIONS OF ITALIAN LITERATURE:  
1811-1815

Though—both because I have sufficiently explained the origins of the romantic interest in Italian literature, and because to dwell on them longer would obscure the purpose of this chapter—I do not intend to discuss the new English editions and translations of Italian books which appeared from 1811 to 1815, I think it only fair to mention them. New grammars were published by M. Santagnello (1813) and C. Laisné (1813 and 1815), probably newcomers, while a certain John Polidori, perhaps that son of Gaetano who later became Byron's physician, issued a *New Pocket Dictionary of the French, Italian, and English Languages* (1814). Two significant anthologies of Italian literature were edited by Santagnello and Cesare Bruno, the first as *The Italian Reader* (1815), the second as *Studio italiano* (1815).<sup>1</sup> In the realm of drama Romualdo Zotti published editions of Guarini's *Pastor*

<sup>1</sup> Contains an extract from Dante unnoticed by Toynbee.

*fido*<sup>2</sup> (1812) and Metastasio's *Opere* (1813), while Santagnello edited *Bellezze* from the great librettist, preceded by a biography and followed by the most interesting scenes from his plays (1815). Serious Italian tragedy was represented by a paraphrase (1814), both Italian and English, of Monti's *Aristodemo* by L. G. Buonavoglia, probably another new teacher of Italian; and by Charles Lloyd's painstaking, if rather dull, three-volume translation of nineteen of Alfieri's most characteristic and important plays as *The Tragedies of Vittorio Alfieri* (1815). In Volumes I and III of *The New British Theatre* (1814) John Galt inserted childish renderings of Goldoni's *Gelosia di Lindoro* as *The Word of Honor* and of *Un curioso accidente* as *Love, Honor, and Interest*, accompanied by a remarkably adult estimate of the Venetian's comic virtues; while John Black, the subsequent editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, not the rector of Cloyton, gave an English dress (1814) to Goldoni's entertaining and, for English dramatists, instructive *Mémoires*.<sup>3</sup> Italian stories were represented by a London edition of *Novelle scelte rarissime* (1814), chosen from Giustiniano Nelli and other Renaissance story-tellers by the well-known editor of Elizabethan poetry, Samuel Weller Singer. Petrarch's *Rime* was again brought out in London, this time by Zotti (1811), while important translations of his sonnets and *canzoni* were made by Robert Morehead in *Poetical Epistles: and Specimens of Poetical Translation* (Edinburgh, 1814). Finally, the epic poets were represented by London editions of the *Gerusalemme liberata* (1813) and *Orlando furioso* (1814); by an anonymous translation of the first seven cantos of Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* as *The Expedition of Gradasso* (Dublin, 1812); and by new versions of Dante's "Ugolino" by Morehead (as above, 1814),<sup>4</sup> *Inferno* by Joseph Hume, "the radical" (1812),<sup>5</sup> and complete *Commedia* by Henry Francis Cary (1814)—the work

<sup>2</sup> Three odd pastorals, dictated in sleep by the well-known Italian medium, Cesare Avena de' Valdieri (sometimes differently spelled), were edited by George Baldwin in London (1811).

<sup>3</sup> Black's *Memoirs of Carlo Goldoni* is still popular. A "Paris et Londres" edition of the French original also appeared in 1814.

<sup>4</sup> In Spenserian stanzas—halting.

<sup>5</sup> In blank verse—wretched.

which, as *The Vision . . . of Dante*, was to make the Italian poem an English household classic. None of these translations except the Boiardo, because of its possible connection with contemporary imitations, needs discussion.

Since to the subject of Italian influence on English lyric poetry I can at this point contribute nothing more exciting than the imitations of Petrarch by Smith, Bowles, Boothby, and Robinson, I propose to confine myself in this section to the first striking English uses of Italian epics and *novelle*. For now came, indeed, the first important poetic elaboration of an episode in Dante, the first imitations of the Italian romantic epic, the first versification of Boccaccio on a large scale, and the first good play made from a *novella*. I refer to Leigh Hunt's *Story of Rimini* (written chiefly between 1812 and 1815, but not actually completed and published till 1816), Richard Wharton's *Roncesvalles* (1812), John Herman Merivale's *Orlando in Roncesvalles* (1814), the anonymous *Spirit of Boccaccio's Decameron* (1812), and Henry Hart Milman's *Fazio* (1815).

Leigh Hunt's *Story of Rimini* is interesting for its effect on contemporary English use of the heroic couplet; for its diffuse and quiet handling of Dante's condensed and storm-swept episode; and for its influence on similar poetic treatments of stories from the *Divina commedia*. On account of its familiarity to most readers of English poetry, it will not be necessary for me to do more here than briefly examine what we may call Hunt's formula, followed by most of his imitators, for "dressing up" a tale from Dante. This prescribed that Dante's sinners be clothed in gorgeous medieval raiment; set against a fully depicted background of tangled Italian forest or sun-kissed garden; and—finally—exonerated of guilt! Hunt's exculpation of Paolo and Francesca was so plausible and effective, as you know, that many people believed it was to be found in Dante himself. These beautiful young people are not to be blamed, he said—it was Francesca's ambitious father, Guido Minore da Polenta, who really caused the adultery. This intriguing old man, knowing his daughter would refuse to marry the deformed Giovanni Malatesta of Rimini, caused Giovanni's handsome young brother, Paolo, preceded by heralds

in vests attired  
Of stiffening gold, with radiant colours fir'd,  
to take his place at the betrothal:

Quick was the plighted troth; and at the close  
The proxy, turning 'mid the general hush,  
Kiss'd her sweet lips, betwixt a rosy blush.

Thus misled into love for Paolo, a love aggravated by companionship amongst all the charms of Italian landscape—

Various the trees and passing foliage here,  
Wild pear, and oak, and dusky juniper, . . .  
And still the pine, flat-topp'd, and dark, and tall,  
In lordly right predominant o'er all—

Francesca could not help hating a husband warped in mind and body, or succumbing to opportunity. As in Dante, the lovers' defenses were broken down by reading in a romance, here called *Launcelot of the Lake*, how

fond Gencura, with her flame long nurst,  
Smil'd upon Launcelot, when he kiss'd her first:—  
That touch, at last, through every fibre slid,  
And Paulo turn'd, scarce knowing what he did,  
Only he felt he could no more dissemble,  
And kiss'd her, mouth to mouth, all in a tremble.—  
Oh then she wept—the poor Francesca wept;  
And pardon oft he pray'd; and then she swept  
The tears away, and look'd him in the face,  
And, well as words might save the truth disgrace,  
She told him all, up to that very hour,  
The father's guile, th' undwelt-in bridal bower,—  
And wish'd for wings on which they two might soar  
Far, far away, as doves to their own shore,  
With claim from none.—That day they read no more. }

In one version of Hunt's narrative the vindictive Giovanni discovered the adultery through Francesca's own words, uttered in sleep; in another, through those of a "spiteful fop." In this latter version the hunchback, bent on revenge, was stung to the double murder by hearing his wife sigh to Paolo:

"To thee it was my father wedded me, . . .  
The rest was ever but an ugly dream."

Full comprehension of these words finally dawning on the murderer, he sent both corpses to Francesca's father, thus punishing the only real sinner of a poem subtitled *Fruits of a Parent's Falsehood*. About this tale of Hunt's still lingers a certain gentle charm and even pathos. As for its faults, the poet himself (*Autobiography*, 1850) realized that by investing his poem "with too many circumstances of description, especially on points not essential to its progress," he "took leave *in toto* of the brevity, as well as the force, of Dante." Needless to say, it is better than most of the Dante adaptations it gave rise to.

Other followers of the epic Italians, especially of the *romanzatori*, used not only their stories but also their narrative devices and sometimes their rime scheme itself. Richard Wharton, whom we have already encountered as a translator of Dante, Boiardo, and Ariosto, was at the time of writing his *Roncesvalles, a Poem, in Twelve Books* connected with the Exchequer, whence Walter Scott referred to him as "the Treasury poet." Though Scott's early poetic romances were, on his own admission, colored by his reading in the Italian poets, it is much easier to trace Italian influence in Wharton. As Ariosto raised his poem on Boiardo, so the *Roncesvalles* is in fact raised on both the *Orlando innamorato* and the *Orlando furioso*. By continually referring to incidents in both these poems Wharton not only took advantage of Ariosto's popularity to lend charm to *Roncesvalles* but sought to popularize the charm of Ariosto's predecessor. Certain minor episodes from both his "forerunners" he incorporated in his own work, the originals being translated or paraphrased, while certain major episodes, like Boiardo's Siege of Albracca and Expedition of Gradasso, he described in the notes. Everywhere he tried to make his readers think of the poems of Boiardo and Ariosto as a continuous narrative, the unfinished business of which was to be wound up by himself. Thus *Roncesvalles* was no less than the third part of a remarkable trilogy! To be sure, Pulci had dealt with Orlando's death, but Wharton had different ideas about the cause of the tragedy of Roncesvalles. He thought it highly desirable that the *primum mobile* of Boiardo's and Ariosto's tales—that Angelica who made Orlando first "innamorato," then "furioso"—should also be connected with the hero's doom. Boiardo had made Angelica voluntarily set out to



ruin Charlemagne and the paladins; Wharton made her involuntarily succeed. A married woman at the opening of *Roncesvalles*, the much-pursued girl seems to have been anxious to settle down. Orlando's mad love, however, continued to corrode his mind and undermine his morals. Once more he deserted Charlemagne, and, deaf to Rinaldo's reproofs—"Louring he turn'd his mooney orbs askance"—plotted to rape Angelica. His old *idée fixe* he at last succeeded in satisfying by drugging her with a potion obtained from Urganda, a wicked "Queen of Spells" or she-Satan, who abetted his lust in order to keep him from joining the Christian army, already on its way to Roncesvalles. Too late to save his friends Orlando learned of the great tragedy (practically all the warriors spared by Boiardo and Ariosto, including—despite legend and history—Charlemagne himself, Wharton devoted to a bloody death), but not too late to avenge them. Restored to sanity by sin and grief, he exterminated the paynims single-handed. After that mighty feat of atonement Urganda herself, enraged by the failure of her unholy designs, killed the invincible hero with an enchanted arrow. Alas, exclaimed Wharton, alas for Angelica's fatal beauty; alas for Urganda's wiles; alas for "love besotted, and tempestuous vice"—

Then Charles had liv'd, nor Roncesvalles' shame  
Obscur'd the splendours of Orlando's fame.

It is worth noting that Wharton wrote a canto called "The Nuptials of Ruggiero and Bradamant," in which, adopting Gibbon's genealogy of the Hanoverians, he was able to "improve" on Ariosto by hailing the fabulous founders of the house of Este as the original ancestors of that

George to whom celestial Wisdom gave  
From ruin the devoted world to save.

As an example of the desiccated couplets in which this long imitation of the *romanzatori* is couched, we may give the passage where the poet prays—in vain—for the spirit of Italian poetry to descend upon him. "If aught divine"

E'er led the Tuscan thro' enchantments drear,  
And rais'd him soaring to the lunar sphere,

Be mine some portion of th' etherial ray,  
 Who from such founts deduce a moral lay. . .

Instead of tracing Wharton's debt to Ariosto and Boiardo, sufficiently acknowledged in his own notes, I beg leave to notice the translation of the first seven cantos of the *Orlando innamorato* referred to above. This, published in the same year as Wharton's poem, albeit in Dublin, may have given the English imitator confidence that at least certain stories of Boiardo, in addition to those translated by himself in 1804, would be known or available to what was called "the mere English reader." Like Wharton's *Roncesvalles* and Hoole's Ariosto, *The Expedition of Gradasso* is done in heroic couplets. It was, indeed, the anonymous translator's dearest wish that his beginning should inspire someone to undertake "a version of the entire work, [which] would, with the Orlando Furioso, versified by Mr. Hoole, form a complete series, and furnish admirers of the Italian metrical Romance with an agreeable entertainment." Into eight English cantos this translator turned the first seven of Boiardo, in which Gradasso, King of Sericana, enamored of Orlando's sword and Rinaldo's horse, invades France and threatens to take what he wants from the cowardly Charlemagne until the English knight, Astolfo, unhorses him by means of a magic lance. With this enchanted spear, you remember, Argaglia, brother of the mischief-making Angelica, had intended to carry captive to Cathay all the peers of France. This plan failing, Angelica herself, in adventures traversing those of Gradasso, succeeded, by the mere power of her eyes, in disabling many of the paladins. It is as follows that Boiardo makes Orlando, looking on Angelica for the first time, record the beginning of his long woes:

"Say why this change—no arms the virgin bears,  
 Her tender hand no missive weapon rears,  
 Yet, wont whole hostile legions to despise,  
 I yield, a victim, to her conquering eyes."  
 Perplex'd, distress'd, o'ercome, to earth he cast  
 His looks. . .

It is important to note that the Irish translator, apparently at the advice of Joseph Cooper Walker, who seems to have befriended

him, abandoned Berni's *rifacimento* of Boiardo for the original poem, flattering himself that "the effort I have made to divest the poem of that disgustful species of mirth which, when incongruously brought forward by false taste, verges upon buffoonery, and to restore it in some degree to the pristine state designed by the author, will not meet disapprobation." From "The Translator's Conclusion" we may quote a romantic tribute to a poet whose very name had been practically forgotten in England in 1755:

FERRARA's ancient Bard!—thy lyre no more  
 Resounds heroic deeds, or magic lore. . . .  
 Long ages since, thy tow'ring spirit fled,  
 And left thy dust immingled with the dead, . . .  
 But, breaking from the icy bonds of death,  
 Which chill'd thy ardour, and abridg'd thy breath,  
 Thy genius still shall live—thy bays shall bloom;  
 And Taste shall frequent point her vot'ry's tomb.  
 The earliest flow'rets genial spring shall shed  
 By fairy hands will o'er the spot be spread,  
 And oft in deep-wrapt Fancy's list'ning ear  
 Soft dulcet symphonies, distinct and clear,  
 By shadowy minstrels pour'd, shall wake around,  
 While forms ærial tread the hallow'd ground.

Even more lively a force than Boiardo in the English poetry of the day was Pulci himself. At last the great description of Orlando at Roncesvalles, long ago recommended by Baretti, found its way into English literature. In many respects John Herman Merivale's *Orlando in Roncesvalles, a Poem, in Five Cantos* (1814) is the most remarkable instance of Italian influence on English literature before the days of the high romantics. In this poem Merivale not only echoed interesting thoughts from Dante and Ariosto; he translated and paraphrased more than a hundred stanzas of the *Morgante Maggiore*, chiefly from Cantos XXV, XXVI, and XXVII, while in the notes he gave a good idea of the rest of the poem. Moreover, he composed two hundred and thirty-four stanzas in *ottava rima*, thus producing what seems to have been the first long English poem in this meter since the days of Elizabeth. By this example he probably stimulated the use of *ottava rima* among

later poets to a greater extent than has ever been pointed out.<sup>9</sup> Finally, the poem he composed was a good one, capable of catching the attention and holding it. Merivale's *Translations from the Greek Anthology* (1806), done with Robert Bland and others, had pleased the exacting author of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, and of the *Orlando* Byron could say: "You have written a very noble poem. . . . Your measure is uncommonly well chosen and wielded." In the *Orlando* we have a fitting climax to that slowly but steadily growing interest in the Italian epic which we have traced from Huggins to Wharton.

After debating for a moment whether Pulci's poem "was intended as a burlesque or as a serious composition," Merivale decided that no critics can fail to "admit the grand tragic effect of much of the latter cantos; nor can they fairly do so much without also admitting a considerable portion of the earlier part of the poem to be equally serious." Though he took most of his material, in addition to the "management of the fable," from the serious latter cantos, Merivale was not insensible to Pulci's peculiar humor, which may be said to consist, perhaps, in an apparently unconscious irony toward Catholic theology, if not toward Christianity itself. In the scene in which the wizard, Malagigi, forces the fiend, Astaroth, to reveal the impending tragedy of Roncesvalles, Merivale kept a touch or two of Pulci's bland irreverence, attributing it in the notes to an innately Protestant temper in the old Italian. In translating a passage to show Orlando's piety, he caught almost exactly his poet's peculiar tone of ironical naïveté:

A dæmon, black as deepest hell,  
Wrapt in the mouldering cerements of the grave,  
Leap'd bounding from the abyss with hideous yell.

<sup>9</sup> John Hookham Frere's *Prospectus of an Intended National Work, by William and Robert Whistlecraft* (1817-18) is generally supposed to have introduced the use of *ottava rima* among the romantic poets. But this work is too entirely burlesque in tendency to have given a sense of the noble and pathetic powers of this stanza, not to mention that peculiarly moving combination of the serious and absurd which characterizes much of Pulci and Ariosto, and was to be so successfully exploited by Byron. I cannot help agreeing with the latter where, after reading Pulci in the original, he wrote: "As to puffing *Whistlecraft*, it won't do" (letter of 7 June, 1820, to John Murray).

Dry was his flesh, and bare and naked, save  
 Where the worm-eaten grave-clothes tatter'd fell.  
 "It is the devil himself!—I know his face,"  
 Orlando cried, and gave him instant chase.

He was also anxious to give English readers, even if only in his notes, a taste of those oddly stirring stanzas of his author in which the same hemistich introduces every line, as when Orlando reproves Rinaldo's love for Antea:

"Ah where, Rinaldo, is thy valour gone?  
 Ah where, Rinaldo, is thy power, thy fame?  
 Ah where, Rinaldo, is thy sense o'erthrown?  
 Ah where, Rinaldo, is thine ancient name?  
 Ah where, Rinaldo, hath thy fancy flown?  
 Ah where, Rinaldo, hast thou lost thy shame?  
 Ah where, Rinaldo, is thy proud command?  
 Ah where, Rinaldo?—In a woman's hand!"

For license to introduce personal sentiments and contemporary references into his story—another practice of the *romanzatori*—Merivale appealed less to Pulci than to Ariosto:

Forgive, kind hearers, my wide wandering strain,  
 Uncheck'd by rules of sterner minstrelsy,  
 If, from the baseless fabric of the brain,  
 I sometimes turn to sad reality. . . .

So he, "of dames and knights, of arms and love,  
 Of courtesies and high attempts," who sung,  
 Oft with the web of fancy interwove  
 Alphonso's praises, or with bolder tongue  
 Call'd down the vengeful lightning from above  
 On Cæsar's head, whom mad Ambition stung  
 O'er blind Ausonia's weeping fields to pour  
 His harpy legions from Iberia's shore.

As a sample of Merivale's numberless paraphrases of Pulci's serious sentiments, we may quote from Orlando's final exhortation to the troops:

"And now, while little life is yet your own,  
 All fearless mingle in the bloody fray!  
 Now, Paladins, be all your prowess shown;

So shall your bodies only die this day.  
 Now let the fathers by their sons be known,  
 And cast delusive fruitless hope away!  
 Fight not for life! Caught in this fatal snare,  
 Our hope is death; our confidence, despair."

In those passages which are obviously of his own invention Merivale wielded the *ottava rima* with even more skill than in the translations and paraphrases. Along with the best Italians he could run two or even three stanzas into each other, as in those beginning:

Now to Montalban's raven-haunted tower,  
 Genius of old romance! direct my way. . .

His ability to make this stanza, according to the usage of the great Italian poets, yield colorful description or draw heartfelt tears deserves illustration. In the following lines the death-devoted Oliver dreams he is once again in the arms of Meridiana:

The banquet rich in royal state is spread,  
 Mid the full blaze of artificial day;  
 The air with music trembles; high o'er head  
 Harmonious minstrels chaunt the jocund lay;  
 Piment and claiRET, hypocras and mead,  
 And sparkling cyprus, and the deep tokay  
 By courteous knights are pledged to blushing maids,  
 While peals of laughter shake the proud arcades.

Later, in the midst of the stricken field, this same Oliver pauses to weep the passing of Astolfo, whereupon the poet, in his own person, exclaims:

O blest in saint-like slumber! O redeem'd  
 From all the miseries of this vale below!  
 Was it for thee the warrior's sorrows stream'd?  
 Can human tears for happy angels flow?  
 Ah! how much rather, if but rightly deem'd,  
 Those tears should fall for human vice and woe,  
 The retchlessness of life, the fear to die,  
 Hopeless desire, heart-sinking infamy!

In these examples of Merivale's use of *ottava rima*, whether translated or original, an indulgent reader can find, I think, at

least the ghost of nearly every fine effect which Byron, Keats, or Shelley were to make this stanza yield.

Another favorite romantic use of Italian literature—that of turning the *novelle* of Boccaccio and others into English poems and plays—was also well established by 1815. After Sotheby's and Hobhouse's versifications of Boccaccio, came, in 1812, *The Spirit of Boccaccio's Decameron*, containing thirty tales<sup>7</sup> "translated, selected, connected, and versified," and sometimes modified, from the originals. This, the most ambitious effort to turn Boccaccio into English verse yet made,<sup>8</sup> was the work of an anonymous Irishman who did not hesitate to mingle his indignation at Erin's wrongs with his professed design of pleasing the British "fair." Far from pleased, some of these must have been offended by his choosing rather more than half his stories from among the more ribald tales of intrigue and adultery. In the rest, however, and in the treatment of the matter with which the entertainments of the various days—here reduced to three—were bound together, the translator showed plenty of romantic sympathy with Boccaccio's love of color, enchantment, perilous adventure, burning passion, and magnanimous generosity. In the matter of color he was, in fact, continually trying to improve on his original, and sometimes in the matter of plot. A short account of a few of his attempts to better Boccaccio's stories will give us, I think, not only an adequate idea of this translator's work, but also of his possible influence on the versifiers of Boccaccio who were to come. The fact that our rimer rendered all the stories in Hudibrastic verse—a verse better adapted, perhaps, to the spirit of the licentious than of the romantic tales—is to be condoned on the ground that his struggles to make it express the more tender or terrifying moods of Boccaccio may have encouraged some of the greater romantics to explore its varied possibilities.

Let us take the well-known stories of Zinevra of Genoa (Shakespeare's Imogen), Dianora of Udine (by analogy, Chaucer's

<sup>7</sup> I, 4; II, 2, 3, 9, 10; III, 1, 3, 6, 8; IV, 2, 10; V, 2, 3, 4, 6, 10; VI, 4; VII, 1, 6, 7, 9; VIII, 2, 4, 10; IX, 2, 6, 9; and X, 2, 5, 6.

<sup>8</sup> In *Tragic Tales* (1587) George Turberville had versified seven of Boccaccio's stories; Dryden, in the *Fables* (1700), three.

Dorigene) and Ghino di Tacco, the robber who cured the Abbot of Cluny of dyspepsia. The Irishman's notion of brightening up the story of the wronged Zinevra was to make her would-have-been ravisher, "Ambrose di Placenza," expand the mere mention of her famous birthmark to:

"And know, a mole as black as jet,  
Encircl'd by six fleaks of down,  
Bright as the golden pheasant's crown,  
Marks forcibly her left firm breast. . ."

When the servant whom her husband, stung to jealous revenge by Ambrose' prurient lies, ordered to take her life, agreed to spare it, Zinevra insisted, to show her courage and the poet's love of color, that he stain her discarded clothes with her own blood:

She bar'd her alabaster arm:  
"Strike here!" she cry'd, "'twill not me harm. . . ."  
The servant, render'd statue like,  
Essays to act but cannot strike;  
His drooping nerveless arm she props,  
The dagger guides, when crimson drops  
Flow freely from her azure veins. . .

The most important change which our author made in the story has to do with Zinevra's device for forcing Ambrose to clear her reputation. When this villain was boasting, once, to Sultan Selim, the disguised Zinevra's befriender, how he had lain with the reputedly chaste and now murdered matron, a blood-curdling voice

Sigh'd through the pictur'd tapestry;  
A female death-like form appear'd,  
Wrapp'd in a shroud, with blood besmear'd;

pointed to "a deep and deadly wound" in its mole-marked side; and, sadly shaking "its ghastly head," summoned the terrified Ambrose to declare the truth. For her ingenious acting Selim—her husband having formerly died—crowned Zinevra "SULTANA of the east"!

Even more important "inventions" were added to Boccaccio's story of the wife who thought to rid herself of an importunate lover by demanding in midwinter, as the price of her virtue, a



May garden. But Ansaldo, little thinking Dianora's *husband* would have to *make* her keep her bargain, had a wizard raise one

In cold December's last long night,  
While frosty stars shoot meteors bright;  
While frozen snow enshrines the ground,  
And rivers in their beds lie bound;  
While chamois herds, and fleecy flocks,  
Seek shelter from projecting rocks. . .

In contrast to Boccaccio's gallant, this Ansaldo did not offer to repay the generosity of Dianora's punctilious spouse by sending her home untouched. Just as he was about to collect his reward, however, the wizard turned him to stone—

His arms, extended for embrace,  
Are manacled in empty space—

and began to make overtures of his own! But Dianora, anxious by this time to play, herself, a fairy-tale rôle, enticed the wizard to change himself to a linnet, whose neck she quickly wrung. After appropriate thunder and lightning the garden vanished, and Ansaldo, unpetrified, gratefully restored her unharmed to the husband who had insisted that she keep her promise.

The Irishman's way of further romanticizing Boccaccio's romantic tales by the addition of colorful, if hackneyed, "inventions" is best illustrated, perhaps, in his treatment of Ghino di Tacco and the Abbot of Cluny. Improving on tradition, he held that the bandit was really a proscribed Venetian noble. It appears that, to keep Ghino from marrying his niece, Ermilina, the Abbot of Cluny had excited both Church and State against him by means of false accusations placed in the Lions' Mouths. Thus deprived of bride and country by a dishonest prelate, Ghino had turned all the fury of his outlawed arms against the pope himself. Needless to say, it was an exultant day for him when he saw the cavalcade of the abbot, accompanied by his niece, winding slowly into his ambush. Only the merest suggestion can be found in Boccaccio for the scene in which the setting sun

On Argentaro's mountain gleams.  
And as the holy troops advance,

Its rays on polish'd halberts dance.  
 The train through piny dells defil'd,  
 Enrich'd by marble rudely pil'd.  
 And all view'd the romantic scene,  
 In strength secure, with mind serene.

But almost immediately they were frightened by moving clouds of dust, out of which rushed Ghino "in armour black"—

The flowing hair his helmet bore,  
 Crimson'd as if imbru'd in gore,  
 Low waving as he gave the rein,  
 Mix'd with his charger's sable mane.

After tolerable descriptions of Ghino's medieval entourage, the "translator" condescended to have the abbot undergo Boccaccio's cure for dyspepsia. In the end the abbot, reconciled to his savior, gave him Ermilina and persuaded Pope Boniface to grant his pardon.

Before leaving this first important versification of Boccaccio, I should say a word, perhaps, of the translator's picturesque descriptions of the story-tellers and the various gardens in which they foregathered to pass the time while the plague raged in Florence. These, sometimes barely suggested by Boccaccio, are nevertheless typical of those romantic dreams of medieval Italy which so many important poets came to associate with his name. In his descriptions of the gay company our rimer varied, thank goodness, his endless couplets, writing of Filomena:

Of jonquille sarsnet was her vest;  
 Her drawers, those Greek ladies use,  
 Were wide and long, so nought compress'd,  
 And met below her lilac shoes.  
 She, and her fair companions all,  
 Carried a silken parasol.

Nor were the men less brightly arrayed, Dioneo perhaps outdoing his two companions:

His tunic, grass-green velvet stuff,  
 Hung loosely on his shoulders square,  
 His vest and pantaloons of buff  
 Inlaid with green were here and there.

A Spanish beaver white he wore,  
 Deck'd by a yellow ostrich plume,  
 With emeralds loop'd up before,  
 Displaying cheeks of vig'rous bloom;  
 His buskins were of chamois hide,  
 Which by his bow in Savoy died.

The gardens, besides being circled with "Huge Appennines of Alpine form" and cooled by cascades whose spray,

rebounding from rough rocks,  
 As if by strong electric shocks,  
 Like sprinkled quicksilver wild flies,  
 Sparkling beneath resplendent skies,

were filled with fine animals:

Pea fowl embellished the smooth green,  
 The common, pied, and graceful white,  
 And sometimes bronze-colour'd are seen,  
 Resembling Etna's lurid light. . . .  
 Some stags approach the glassy lake,  
 With ears erect, and watchful eyes,  
 And as they stoop, their thirst to slake,  
 They see their antlers touch the skies.

With similar facile descriptions our author sweetened Boccaccio to the point of saturation. Obviously, he was bent on proving that in the Italian's garden was concentrated, as Coleridge was later to put it,

The brightness of the world, O thou once free,  
 And always fair, rare land of courtesy!

Finally, the romantic use of Italian *novelle* for dramatic purposes is well illustrated, as well as foreshadowed, by Henry Hart Milman's *Fazio* (1815). In his *History of Fiction* (1814) John Colin Dunlop, by discussing not only the Italian *novelle* but also their influence on the English drama of the Renaissance, may be supposed to have given young playwrights a useful hint. While perhaps thus stimulated, Milman found the actual material for his "attempt at reviving our old national drama" without Dunlop's aid, a translation of Grazzini's *Cene*, I, 5, having appeared in

William Tooke's *Varieties of Literature* (1795). Though claiming to have taken great liberties with his original, the young dramatist followed Grazzini much more closely than his Elizabethan models usually followed the *novellieri*. He made, in fact, only one or two changes in the story of the Marlowesque alchemist who took advantage of the accidental death of a usurer to seize that money which soon made "all our Florence" (in Grazzini, Pisa) "too narrow for his branching glories." Intoxicated with fame—"And that's more golden than the richest gold"—he revelled to his fall. Though he dearly loved his wife, Bianca, he could not resist the overtures of the highly connected courtesan, Aldabella (in Grazzini, merely the daughter, Maddalena, of Fazio's new housekeeper). In revenge his jealous wife revealed the secret of Fazio's wealth to the Duke of Florence, who, finding the usurer's body buried in the alchemist's cellar, refused to believe that he had not committed murder as well as theft. Too late Bianca realized that her jealousy had overwhelmed her with poverty, Fazio with death. Maddened by the baseness of men, their penchant to vice, and their susceptibility to misery, she contemplated murdering her two babies (a resolution really acted on, though not from such complicated motives, in Grazzini). After the death of Fazio she exposed the wickedness of the Marchesa Aldabella at a ball, commended her children to the state, and died of grief—additions imagined, of course, by Milman. As well as enjoying some six editions by 1818, this play, usually under the title of *The Italian Wife*, was performed from time to time in nearly all the important London theatres. Passages like the following, in which Bianca, true to the spirit and partly to the letter of the *novella*, runs distracted as Fazio is being hung, seem to have been particularly enjoyed:

Fazio, my poor Fazio—

He murder'd not—he found Bartolo dead.  
The wealth did shine in his eyes, and he was dazzled.  
And when that he was gaily gilded up,  
She, she, I say, (nay, keep away from her,  
For she hath witchcraft all around her,) she  
Did take him to her chamber—Fie, my liege!  
What should my husband in her chamber?—Then,  
Aye then, I madden'd.—Hark! hark! hark!—the bell,

The bell that I set knolling—hark!—Here, here,  
Massy and cold, it strikes—Here, here.

(*Clasping her forehead.*)

I cannot think of a better way to wind up our study of the triumph of the romantic interest in Italian literature than to quote from Hazlitt's famous summary of the romantic attitude toward Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Ariosto, and Tasso as he crystallized it in 1815. I refer to his article on Sismondi's *De la littérature du midi de l'Europe* in the *Edinburgh Review* for June. Between 1811 and 1815 both Sismondi, best known as the historian of the Italian republics, and his countryman, Pierre Louis Ginguené, had either produced or begun to produce histories of Italian literature which, for a sympathetic interpretation of the subject in terms of the social, political, and artistic conditions that produced it, not only frequently equalled Crescimbeni and Tiraboschi but sometimes surpassed them. In these writers, notwithstanding the fact that Sismondi could not entirely free himself from reliance on the old rules and standards of taste, France made ample amends to Italian literature for the wrong done it by Rapin, Boileau, and Bouhours. Though the extent of the reparations can be gathered from Robert Bland's descriptive article, "Ginguené and Sismondi's Literary History of Italy," in the *Quarterly Review* for April, 1814, Hazlitt's creative criticism of Sismondi is more interesting. In Hazlitt the half-century-old attempt to accept and love the Italians for what they are, for what they can give us if we will let them, finally triumphed. He sought merely to understand, isolate, and define the effects and beauties peculiar to each author. In the matter of Dante, for instance, he exerted all his skill to analyse the subjectivity that gives his poem "a gloomy abstraction . . . which lies like a dead weight upon the mind; a benumbing stupor from the intensity of the impression; a terrible obscurity like that which oppresses us in dreams; an identity of interest which moulds every object to its own purpose, and clothes all things with the passions and imaginations of the human soul. . . ." With regard to Petrarch's relation to Laura, he could not agree with Sismondi in wishing it had been more intimate. To him Petrarch represented the supreme instance of "the way in which

the passions very commonly operate in minds accustomed to draw their strongest interests from constant contemplation:"

For purposes of inspiration, a single interview was quite sufficient. The smile which sank into his heart the first time he ever beheld her played round her lips ever after; the look with which her eyes first met his never passed away. The image of his mistress still haunted his mind, and was recalled by every object in nature. Even death could not dissolve the fine illusion: for that which exists in the imagination is alone imperishable. As our feelings become more ideal, the impression of the moment becomes less violent; but the effect is more general and permanent.

Of Boccaccio he asserted, with special reference to the stories of Federigo Alberighi and the widow, Isabella and Lorenzo, Tancredi and Ghismonda, Girolamo and Salvestra, and Pasquino and Simona—some of them "perfect masterpieces"—that

he carried sentiment of every kind to its very highest purity and perfection. By sentiment we would here understand the habitual workings of some one powerful feeling, where the heart reposes almost entirely upon itself, without the violent excitement of opposing duties or untoward circumstances.

In summing up, once more, the relative merits of Tasso and Ariosto, Hazlitt seems to indicate that Englishmen had at last adopted the Italian point of view as defined by Baretti. While admitting parts of Tasso to be "exquisitely beautiful," he found that

the incidents in Ariosto are more lively, the characters more real, the language purer, the colouring more natural. . . Tasso was the more accomplished writer, Ariosto the greater genius. . . . The perusal of the one leaves a very high relish behind it; there is a vapidness in the other, which palls at the time, and goes off sooner afterwards. Tasso indeed sets before us a dessert of melons, mingled with roses:—but it is not the first time of its being served up. . .

The accuracy with which Hazlitt here summed up the romantic feeling for Italian literature should be immediately apparent to all who have read the present book or are at all familiar with the

works of the chief romantic writers. There was an obvious answer to Lord Thurlow's inquiry in *Moonlight* (1814) as to the whereabouts of certain famous poets:

Or in what shades does Ariosto walk,  
That with Orlando's madness charm'd the world?  
Where now is Danté? In what region pure  
Of that unbounded World he sung so well?  
Or Petrarch, that to love was sworn to death?  
Or Tasso, in whose stately verse we see  
Whatever the great Roman was before?

In addition to other heavenly lodgment, they were at last ensconced in the purer regions of the British heart.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, LORD BYRON, AND OTHERS: THE  
FIRST NOTABLE IMAGINATIVE WORKS BASED ON  
ITALIAN HISTORY: 1811-1815

Almost as strikingly as Italian poetry, did Italian history, the slow rise of interest in which we have traced from Cork to Rough, become a living force in English literature in these days. I refer more especially to Landor's play, *Ferrante and Giulio* (written, 1811), and Byron's verse narrative, *Parisina* (written, 1815), both founded on the domestic tragedies of the Este family of Ferrara as brought to British attention by Gibbon and Roscoe. Before discussing these, however, I should like to glance at a pair of plays on Italian history translated by Lloyd among *The Tragedies of Vittorio Alfieri* (1815). A brief review of *The Pazzi* and *Don Garzia* at this point will serve several purposes: first, it will reward our study of the rise of interest in the Medici, only mildly requited by Rough's *Lorenzino*; second, it will give us a taste of that tragic temper which was to have a bracing effect on English romantic drama; and third, it will show us some samples of Lloyd's skill as a translator.

Had Roscoe and the English panegyrists of Lorenzo been his sources, Alfieri could never have turned the conspiracy of the Pazzi—in which Giuliano was killed and Lorenzo wounded in the Duomo of Florence on 26 April, 1478—into a play on his favorite theme of tyrannicide. In Machiavelli, however, he found sufficient

justification for those oppressions by which he represented Lorenzo as driving the Pazzi—led by Raymond (in history, Francesco), the fiery son of old Guglielmo, the head of the family (in history, Iacopo, Francesco's unmarried uncle)—to rebellion. From this play—horror of horrors—the great Lorenzo emerges as "Crafty, flagitious, apprehensive, cruel." Determined to grind the faces of the wealthy Pazzi till they can no longer rival the Medici, he seizes their possessions, changes ancient statutes, and has Raymond expelled from the honorable post of gonfalonier of the republic. As in Machiavelli, the gentle Giuliano gives him fair warning:

Brother, believe me, to eradicate  
Those seeds of liberty, by nature placed  
In every human breast, no little art  
And management, besides a length of time,  
Are requisite: these seeds may be suppress'd  
By spilling human blood, but not extinguish'd,  
And often times from blood they shoot again  
With fresh luxuriance. . .

In a personal interview Lorenzo, by refusing to restore the gonfalon to Raymond, goads him to embark on the fatal conspiracy. Of the Medici Raymond exclaims:

What attribute of kings possess ye not?  
Already ye possess the public hate,  
Their cruel artifice, their frantic vices,  
Their infamous contrivances. . .

As in history, Archbishop Salviati comes from Rome to assure old Guglielmo that the pope has blessed the enterprise, and to rouse the Florentines to a sense of liberty, for, as Raymond says,

Their necks they have accustomed to the yoke;  
Their natural rights forgotten; they know not  
That they're in chains, much less desire to burst them;  
Slavery, the natures who resist it not,  
Transforms, embrates. . .

It is this fatal fault, the lack of popular support, which makes the Pazzi conspiracy collapse after the failure to murder Lorenzo. In the last scene Raymond, having wounded himself in stabbing Giuliano,



flees home to die in the arms of his wife, Bianca (here metamorphosed from the cousin to the sister of Lorenzo). And thither Lorenzo, thinking the death of his son, "Ere he gain'd his, might aggravate his pangs," bears old Guglielmo! Yet this relentless man, staggered by the murder of Giuliano, seems to suffer a change of heart as the curtain falls. He orders Bianca to be disentwined from Raymond's corpse with the words:

Time alone  
Can soothe her grief.—And time alone can prove  
That I'm no tyrant, and that these are traitors.

Such a play could have been written only by a man whose personal disgust with tyrants led him to convert all historical conspiracies to a single pattern. We may safely affirm it could never have originated in England. Omitted from Montucci's edition of Alfieri's dramas (1806), Lloyd translated it merely as a part of his design to turn all the major tragedies into English. It may be supposed to have raised among Roscoe's admirers many a gasp of surprise, if not of indignation.

More interesting to people who have traced the rise of English interest in Italian domestic tragedy from Cork is *Don Garzia*, in which Alfieri used the old story of fratricide and filicide as a means of arraigning yet again the bloody race of Medicean tyrants. In the first act Cosimo gathers together his three sons, Diego (in history, Giovanni), Piero, and young Garzia, in order to question them on the most expedient means of ridding himself of an enemy, one Salviati, descended from that archbishop who had formerly endangered Medici domination. Diego, Cosimo's favorite, counsels Salviati's immediate death, but Garzia pleads for mercy. He even reads his murderous father a lecture on the history of their race:

Reflect  
Upon thy ancestors: which of them died,  
Beloved and powerful, in tranquillity?  
Cosmo alone, he who enjoy'd what power  
To him was delegated; he whom power  
Sought in proportion as he sought it not.  
Think of the others: Julian transfix'd;  
The bold Lorenzo scarcely saved alive;  
Pedro expell'd; and Alexander slain.

Yet these of blood were never avaricious.  
Ah! these impressively suggest to thee  
How slippery is the basis of that throne  
Founded on blood.

Against the already unpopular Garzia the brothers, especially the ambitious and malignant Piero, further incense Cosimo by revealing that he is in the custom of meeting the family enemy, Salviati, in private conference—probably seditious—and is in love with his daughter, Julia. After subtly worming the truth of these charges out of Garzia, Cosimo turns upon him with the fury of a tiger. Charging him with treason, he orders him to summon Salviati to one of their customary meetings and, without more ado, murder him. As hostage for the boy's obedience he then enchains Julia, threatening to take her life. As Garzia tells his frantic mother, the loving Eleonora:

I love Julia; yes;  
And indiscreetly I myself declared  
That love to Cosmo: hence in him arose  
Th' unnatural wish, worthy of him alone,  
To make the father of the maid beloved  
Die by the lover's hands.

At first Garzia resolves to die rather than commit the murder, but the report that Cosimo is hovering over Julia, knife in hand, waiting for news of the deed, makes him ask the treacherous Piero to summon Salviati to their accustomed meeting place. Then, assured that the victim is within the garden cave, he stabs him in the dark. But it was Cosimo's favorite son, Diego, the heir apparent (in history, of course, the second son, Cardinal Giovanni), whom the ambitious Piero had concealed in the cave. When Cosimo discovers Diego slain, he stabs Garzia—the only particular in which Alfieri's version of the story resembles the one we know. Eleonora dies of grief, while Garzia expires muttering:

We all . . . are impious . . . Never did the day  
Visit a more flagitious race than ours.

In 1811 Walter Savage Landor, confessedly inspired by Alfieri in regard to both form and moral, attempted a tragedy on that conspiracy by which Giulio, the bastard Este, in concert with his

brother, Ferrante, sought to overthrow Alfonso I, Duke of Ferrara, in 1506. The immediate cause of this conspiracy was, you remember, Alfonso's failure to punish the lecherous Cardinal Ippolito for causing Giulio, because a woman had praised his eyes, to be blinded. Landor seems to have made use of all the historical facts except, perhaps, those which record that Alfonso, the conspirators being discovered and condemned to death, commuted their sentence to life imprisonment. But the Italianate dramatist, according to his biographer, Forster, remained intensely dissatisfied with his imitative *Ferrante and Giulio*. In a fit of despair he even threw it into the fire. Forster hints, however, that the short dramatic piece, "Ippolito di Este" (first published in *Gebir, Count Julian, and Other Poems*, 1831), is a fragment, perhaps rewritten from memory, of this early play. The first time we hear of this fragment, if such it be, is the year 1821, when Landor sent it to Southey in manuscript. It is probably fair, however, to treat it as Forster suggests, and I shall do so. The two scenes thus preserved—one between the cardinal and the lady in a garden; the other between Ferrante and Giulio in prison—suggest distinctly that something came before, between, and after. We must note that Landor, for some reason, scrambled the names of the rebellious brothers, so that Ferrante is the beautiful-eyed bastard, while Giulio is the sympathetic brother who would help him depose the tyrannical Alfonso.

We may assume, I think, certain preliminary scenes, perhaps an act, in which Giulio's devotion to his illegitimate brother is brought out; also the chaste love of Ferrante and Rosalba (the woman), which Cardinal Ippolito does his best to mar with lawless solicitations. In the second act, perhaps, Ippolito and Ferrante quarrel openly. Ippolito learns that Rosalba admires Ferrante's eyes and has him imprisoned, already designing the cruel revenge we know of. In act three the imprisoned Ferrante appeals to Duke Alfonso, but without success, to restrain the cardinal. Always a favorite with the people, who pass up and down outside his prison window, he contemplates inviting them to rescue him, and plans a revolution. Though he does not disclose his plan to the compassionate Giulio, who visits him in prison, the same idea begins to work in the

brother's brain. At the beginning of act four—as I see it—Ippolito, walking in the garden with Rosalba, learns definitely that he can never have her. He also learns that she prizes Ferrante's heart still higher than his eyes. He has won her by continually praising the generous deeds of others:

How high,  
O Heaven! must that man be, who loves, and who  
Would still raise others higher than himself  
To interest his beloved!

All my soul  
Is but one drop from his, and into his  
Falls, as earth's dew falls into earth again.

The enraged cardinal, however, proceeds to put his original plan into practice. He will see how she likes a sightless philanthropist! Then we have the scene in the prison where Ippolito in person, handing it to the visiting Giulio, delivers Ferrante's sentence. When the brothers read the harsh decree, which also contains threats against the life of Rosalba, their revolutionary projects are suddenly disclosed to each other and brought to a head. Giulio urges Ferrante to appeal to the people, impatiently gathered outside his prison window—"Up, seize the moment; show yourself." Though Ferrante insists that he will "await but not arouse their vengeance," he adds under his breath, "O, were he away! But if I fail, he too must die, being here." Giulio tries to address the people, but Ferrante, apparently for the former's sake, drags him from the window, even as he pleads,

Let me call out: they are below the grate:  
They would deliver you: try this one chance.  
Obdurate! would you hold me down? They're gone!

Ferrante has decided to undergo his fate.

Perhaps Landor ended his play here, but in my conception there was another act. In it Giulio excites the people to rescue their blinded favorite and depose their wicked prince in favor of a republican form of government. Tried for treason, both Ferrante and Giulio nobly defend themselves but are condemned by Alfonso, egged on by the cardinal, to die. As the curtain descends, they

march bravely forth to the scaffold. There were at least two objections to this dénouement: its historical inaccuracy, and the improbability of Este princes advocating the ideals of the French Revolution. In a moment of discouragement Landor threw the whole into the fire. But in retrospect he seems to have liked the garden and prison scenes and restored them—hastening, and changing the character of, Ferrante's death—from memory. Since Ferrante's last thoughts of Rosalba in "Ippolito di Este" are hardly those of a suicide, they may have been preserved from the last act of *Ferrante and Giulio* as we have imagined it:

Tell her . . . no, say not we shall meet again,  
For tears flow always faster at those words . . .  
May the thought come, but gently, like a dream.

Rather less ambitious was Byron's narrative treatment of the direst of the Este tragedies described by Gibbon. Following Euripides, Schiller, and Alfieri, Byron could find nothing unfit for poetry in the incestuous love of step-relations. He seems to have been attracted to the Ugo-Parisina story as to a symbol of the cruel despotism with which selfish, hidebound power seeks to curb the heady, exuberant rebellion of youth. Before the judgment seat of "The chief of Este's ancient sway," Byron's Hugo defends his lost cause nobly. He sees himself not so much as the victim of uncontrolled desire as of the selfish cruelty of the man who fathered him. He recalls that his own strength and valor have outshone those of legitimate princes

When charging to the cheering cry  
Of "Este and of Victory."

He sums up what is, in fact, a fine case as follows:

'Tis true that I have done thee wrong,  
But wrong for wrong: this—deem'd thy bride,  
The other victim of thy pride—  
Thou know'st for me was destined long.  
Thou saw'st, and covetedst her charms;  
And with thy very crime, my birth,  
Thou tauntedst me—as little worth;  
A match ignoble for her arms,

Because, forsooth, I could not claim  
The lawful heirship of thy name. . .

As err'd the sire, so err'd the son,  
And thou must punish both in one.  
My crime seems worst to human view,  
But God must judge between us too!

When Hugo is beheaded in his lover's sight, she, as we may readily imagine, goes mad—

But Parisina's fate lies hid  
Like dust beneath the coffin lid.

Perhaps, according to the old Italian way in these matters,

She fell by bowl or steel  
For that dark love she dared to feel. . .

Too late old Azo (in history, Niccolò) discovers that justice may be only a fool's name for iniquity:

With all the consciousness that he  
Had only pass'd a just decree,  
That they had wrought their doom of ill,  
Yet Azo's age was wretched still.

In these works of Byron and Landor we have a very fair foretaste of the use to which the high romantics loved to put the old crimes and conspiracies of Italian history. We should note, however, before leaving the subject, that future poets were accustomed to lay even more emphasis than Landor and the young Byron on the "republican" element in Italian murders and revolts. Preoccupation would hardly be too strong a word, I think, for their attention to the democratic implications of Italian history—a fact which leads me to pause just a moment to glance at Sismondi's *Histoire des républiques italiennes du moyen âge*, a sixteen-volume work which began publication in Paris in 1809 but which was not completed till 1818. Though not immediately translated, this work was avidly received in England. The interest warmed and ripened by Gibbon and Roscoe was now brought to maturity by Sismondi. His great work was absolutely timely. Young poets'

hearts, bursting with sympathy for the ideals of the French Revolution, were broken in 1816 by the Congress of Vienna. With an urge often called "romantic," but which would be as well described as "human," they began dreaming of times and countries where republicanism had had a notable success. The footsteps of their reverie Sismondi guided into a democracy-enchanted land. Italian history he regarded as one long battle between republican heroes and their oppressors. In explaining the purpose of his great work Sismondi sometimes felt it necessary (as in his special preface to a well-known English abridgment) to combat the notion that the medieval affairs of Italy are too unimportant to merit detailed study. This attitude is a mistake, he said, because all such history as bodies forth a moral lesson is important. Now the history of the Italian republics furnishes us with the grandest moral lesson ever read. If useful history begins only at the period when the government belongs to the people, and not the people to the government, then the medieval history of Italy is eminently, even peculiarly, worth recording. How the Italians, from the moment they formed their famous republics for the common good, prospered and, while the other nations of Europe suffered from tyranny and ignorance, rose in intelligence, commerce, art, science, and virtue till they became the envy of all Europe and of all time, is the most thrilling story that can be told. How, towards the end of the fifteenth century, they were pulled down from their greatness by the usurpation of Italian tyrants and the incursion of plundering French, German, and Spanish hordes, is the saddest story ever heard. But while these new barbarians finally destroyed the opulence, culture, and freedom which they found in Italy, unconsciously they carried home with them a sense of better things, a lovely memory which, in spite of themselves, softened and moulded their lives, and is still Europe's hope of salvation. Sismondi pleaded with his readers not to forget this democratic debt, this memory, this example, this earnest of a better time to come.

Nor were readers of Sismondi likely to forget. Under his magic touch every obscure Italian riot, revolt, or conspiracy had become an absorbing struggle between the forces of fertilizing freedom and blighting tyranny. Poets could not help rushing into verse on

the subject. Plays were produced in rapid succession, and the boards of the London theatres were stalked in turn by Giovanni da Procida, Cola di Rienzi, and others of their majestic breed. Over them, on a white horse, rode Masaniello, dressed in cloth of silver, preceded by flower girls, and displaying in his right hand the charter of Charles V. But this story, if I am to have the good fortune to tell it, must be reserved for another place.

LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK, LORD HOLLAND, AND OTHERS  
ITALIAN FREEDOM, BY BECOMING A BURNING ISSUE  
WITH ENGLISHMEN, PROMISES TO INSPIRE A LONG  
LINE OF POEMS AND NOVELS: 1812-1815

Though the literary travellers who visited Italy on the reopening of the Continent in 1814 and 1815—John Milford, John Mayne, and Lord Glenbervie<sup>9</sup>—seem to have been practically unaffected by that growth of sympathy for Italian republican independence which we have traced from Hervey to Bustace, certain of their compatriots, amongst them men in high places, were so stirred as to try to guarantee to Italy, in the wreck of the Napoleonic régime, some of the much-vaunted British freedom. For a time England, though officially protecting Bourbon rights in Sicily against Murat, seems to have thought of annexing the island. Such a move, though far from disinterested, would probably have been explained, and not altogether hypocritically, as a temporary measure adopted till the Sicilians should perfect themselves in the ways of British self-government! Various aspects of this possibility are presented in T. W. Vaughan's *View of the Present State of Sicily* (1811), largely translated from Paolo Balsamo, John Galt's *Voyages and Travels* (1812), W. H. Thompson's *Sicily and Its Inhabitants* (1813), George Russell's *Tour through Sicily in the Year 1815* (1819), and Captain William Henry Smyth's *Memoir . . . of Sicily*

<sup>9</sup> While Milford's *Observations* were published as early as 1818, Mayne's *Journal* was not edited by J. M. Colles till 1909, nor Glenbervie's *Diaries* by F. Bickley till 1928. Guidebooks calculated to take advantage of the resumed popularity of Italian travel were John Millard's *Picture of Italy* (1815), Sir Richard Colt Hoare's *Hints to Travellers in Italy* (1815), and Mrs. Carleton's *Brief Advice to Travellers in Italy* (about 1815).



*and Its Islands* (prepared, 1814-16, but not published till 1824). There were also proposals, much more disinterested if also less warship-toothed, for guaranteeing democratic autonomy, if not unity, to the various states of the peninsula. Most active among the northern statesmen stirred by this ideal was Lord William Bentinck, Britain's envoy and commander-in-chief in Sicily from 1811 to 1814, who sought to give some sort of tangible form to the accumulated British sentiment of half a century.

Bentinck played an interesting and solemn game. To keep Sicily out of the hands of the French and to seduce Tuscany and Genoa from French allegiance, he offered these states, in the name of England, liberal constitutions, which he himself planned and partly drew up. Such a constitution he forced the King and Queen of Sicily to grant their subjects in 1812, and in 1814, while Napoleon was staggering to his fall, he landed in Leghorn proclaiming:

"Rise! Italians, rise!—Behold us here to aid you.—Behold us here in order to remove from your necks the iron yoke of Bonaparte. Portugal, Spain, Sicily, Holland, will declare to you the greatness of England's generosity, the purity of her disinterested zeal. . . . We ask you not to come over to us: our voices exhort you only to assert your rights, to re-establish your liberties. We will applaud you afar off; we will join you when summoned; and if you add your forces to ours, Italy may, perhaps, be restored to her ancient destiny. . . ."<sup>10</sup>

Similar promises, backed by the English fleet, won Genoa in 1814, and a constitutional government, incorporating many of the virtues of that of the Ligurian Republic of 1797, was immediately set on foot. But the diplomats at Vienna circumvented the liberty-loving lord. In spite of the fact that he had used his plenipotentiary power to guarantee both Sicily and Genoa their constitutions in the name of England, Ferdinand was allowed to sink back into autocracy, while Castlereagh handed Genoa to the King of Sardinia. England's pledged word was broken. In Italian eyes Bentinck appeared to have out-Machiavelled the devil himself. Perhaps the English ambassador's promises were mere strokes of policy with which he sought to undo Napoleon by playing at his own game. But I think

<sup>10</sup> See a *History of Italy during the Consulate and Empire of Napoleon Buonaparte* (1828), translated from Carlo Botta by Frances Moore.

not. Bentinck was, perhaps, the product of that public opinion in favor of Italians created by the writings of Baretti, Moore, Piozzi, and all the others.

Nor did he stand alone in his high hope. It is certain that before the crushing Congress of Vienna at least two other Englishmen planned constitutions for the regenerated Italy. Charles Kelsall's rather elaborate *Idea of a Constitution for Italy* (1814) was only less closely modelled on the wonderful government of England than Lord Holland's constitution for Naples, published as *A Letter to a Neapolitan from an Englishman, 1815* (1818). Lord Holland, the nephew of Fox and Lord Privy Seal in Lord Grenville's ministry of "All the Talents" (1806-7), said with humorous irony that his letter had been described as "a treasonable paper, exhorting Murat to wage war against Austria and England, to conquer Italy, and to establish a democratical constitution on the ruin of the foreign dynasties so lately restored, and so studiously, though incorrectly, denominated legitimate."<sup>11</sup> So far had the political idealism of Boswell and our sentimental travellers prevailed, even amongst British politicians and statesmen, by 1815.

Sentiment in the political realm running so high, we may justly expect creative verve in the fields of poetry and fiction. The truth is, however, that before 1815 we find very few expressions of that passion which was to play so large a part in the verse not only of Byron and Shelley but of many of the other important poets of the nineteenth century, including the Brownings, Clough, Rossetti, and Swinburne. Among the juvenile poems of Mrs. Hemans, whose mother was of Italian descent, we may note, nevertheless, a "Sonnet to Italy" in which the compassionate girl deplores the fact that the land of "unclad suns" and "myrtle shores" should lack the blessings of British liberty—

Yet far from thee inspiring Freedom flies,  
To Albion's coast and ever-varying skies.

This tame sentiment preludes to Mrs. Hemans' later ardor for a free Italy only in the same proportion as Byron's arraignment of degenerate Venice in *The Siege of Corinth* (written, 1815)—

<sup>11</sup> *Observations on a Pamphlet Entitled: The Bourbons of Naples* (1814), translated from the French, resented the betrayal of Murat's Revolution-colored Kingdom of Naples.

To him<sup>12</sup> had Venice ceas'd to be  
Her ancient civic boast—'the Free'—

forecasts the vitriolic taunts with which he was later to try to shame the fallen city into resisting Austria. A novel preoccupied with Italy's political wrongs, agonies, and aspirations, Ugo Foscolo's *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis*, was published in London in 1811 and translated in 1814 as *The Letters of Ortis to Lorenzo*. It was going to be some years, however, before the English novel, as practised by Meredith, Disraeli, Margaret Roberts, and T. A. Trollope, grappled heartily and successfully with material like Foscolo's. Meanwhile English poetry, in spite of the paucity of proof before 1815, was on edge to begin its long and gallant defense of Italy's fight for democratic autonomy. It is hardly necessary for me to say that not a single important incident in that struggle was to fail to be commemorated in from fair to gorgeous English verse.

In Milman's *Fazio Philario*, an *improvvisatore*, sang, for the sake of answering them, a series of sad rhetorical questions like the following, which we may imagine floating down from the stage of the Surrey Theatre on the night of 22 December, 1816:

Sad and sunken Italy!  
The plunderer's common prey!  
When saw the eye of day  
So very a slave as thee?  
Long, long a bloody stage  
For petty kinglings, tame,  
Their miserable game  
Of puny war to wage.  
Or from the northern star  
Come haughty despots down,  
With iron hand to share  
Thy bruised and broken crown. . . .

Loose and languid Italy!  
Where now the magic pow'r  
That in thy doleful hour  
Made a queen of thee?  
The pencil cold and dead,

<sup>12</sup> Alp.

Whose lightest touch was life;  
The old immortal strife  
Of thy high poet's fled?  
From her inglorious urn  
Will Italy arise?  
Will golden days return  
'Neath the azure of her skies?

The answer which the *improvisatore* made to his own questions was to be given over and over by the great poets and novelists of the nineteenth century:

This is done, oh, this is done,  
When the broken land is one;  
This shall be, oh, this shall be,  
When the slavish land is free!

For the long and impressive banquet in which English literature fed so profoundly on the information and emotions whose rise we have traced, I hope I have sufficiently set the table. Or, to use my old figure, I trust I have shown how the tide of British interest in Italian character, history, literature, art, and scenery swelled high enough to successfully buoy the ship of romantic writing. He who would explore the cargo of that vessel must be sure to be affected for his subject with something like bulimia, which is defined as "excessive hunger, often suddenly at night."



## INDEX



## INDEX

The following index has been so arranged that it will, to a certain extent, serve as a bibliography. Since, as explained in the foreword, I intend to publish a bibliography covering the whole subject of English interest in Italy from 1642 to 1900, it seemed well to omit even a selected bibliography of the formal type from the present book.

Under each author's name I have listed, usually by abbreviated titles, such of his books as I have discussed or referred to by name. Translations I have given under the name of the translator, never of the author of the original work. When the translator is unknown, I have listed the book like an anonymous work—that is, as a chief item.

In listing persons I have used surnames followed by Christian names wherever practicable. Married women are listed under the surname by which they are better known, the missing information being given, when possible, in parentheses. When persons are best known by titles (as sometimes in England) or by Christian names, adopted names, place names, or nicknames, or by some combination of these (as often in Italy), I have given these first, indicating the missing or true names, if known, in parentheses. Most Italian rulers are listed under their surnames. Titles, except of nobility, are used sparingly.

In spelling Italian names I have encountered difficulties. Very often surnames, Christian names, and even nicknames are susceptible of a variety of possible spellings, while the conjunction of first and last names by means of "di," "de," and "da" presents many a puzzle. As a way out of these difficulties I have usually given, when a person is fairly well known in English, the spelling most likely to be recognized; when less well known, what seems to me the most widely accepted modern Italian spelling, sometimes referring to Garollo's *Dizionario biografico universale*. Into the spelling of Italian Christian names I have taken the liberty of introducing a certain amount of fullness, Italian contractions, elisions, and amalgams, though sometimes founded on affectionate tradition, are often given differently by different authorities, have sometimes been abandoned by Italians themselves, and do not seem, except in the case of very great men, to be worth perpetuating in an English book. Particles like "da," when belonging to substitutional surnames, are not to be applied to the corrective material enclosed in parentheses.

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## VITA

RODERICK MARSHALL, son of William Irvin and Elizabeth Catherine Marshall, was born in Altoona, Pennsylvania, on 29 March, 1903. Upon graduating from the Altoona High School in 1920, he spent the academic year 1920-21 in Amherst College. Transferring to Columbia College, he received the degree of A.B. from that institution in 1923. Immediately proceeding to graduate work in the Department of English and Comparative Literature of Columbia University, he obtained the degree of M.A. in 1924. In 1925 he was appointed to be Instructor in English in Barnard College, a post he has held continuously with the exception of the year 1928-29, which he, enjoying a Columbia University Fellowship, spent in study in England. Most of his summers since 1923 have also been spent in foreign study, chiefly in the libraries of Florence, Rome, Venice, Paris, and London. In 1929 he married Jessie Laird Robb, M.D., M.R.C.P. (London), of Birmingham, England. A daughter, Janet Marshall, was born in 1932.





